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ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

WITH CHAPTERS ON

ENGLISH LITERATURE (1832–1892) AND
ON AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

GEORGE R. CARPENTER

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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PREFATORY NOTE

At the request of the publishers and with the consent of Mr. Stopford Brooke, Chapters IX–XII have been added by Mr. George R. Carpenter of Columbia University. It is appropriate at this time to recall to the public the history of this remarkable little volume, which has, in a way, become an English classic. It was first issued by Macmillan and Company, in 1876, under the title of *A Primer of English Literature*, and won the warm approbation of Matthew Arnold, whose essay, "A Guide to English Literature" (*Mixed Essays*, pages 135–153), is a critical estimate of Mr. Brooke's method and results. In 1896 the volume was revised and in part rewritten by the author, and appeared under the title of *English Literature*. The present additions continue the history of English Literature through the period ending with the deaths of Tennyson and Browning, and include a brief sketch of American Literature.

THE PUBLISHERS.

March, 1900.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

and delighting the world for more than 1000 years." And that is a fact in which those who write and those who read English literature ought to feel a noble pride.

2. **The English and the Welsh.** — This literature is written in English, the tongue of our fathers. They lived, while this island of ours was still called Britain, in North and South Denmark, in Hanover and Friesland — Jutes, Angles, and Saxons. Their common tongue and name were *English;* but, either because they were pressed from the inland, perhaps by Attila, or for pure love of adventure, they took to the sea, and, landing at various parts of Britain at various times, drove back, after 150 years of hard fighting, the Britons, whom they called Welsh, to the land now called Wales, to Strathclyde, and to Cornwall. It is well for those who study English literature to remember that in these places the Britons remained as a distinct race with a distinct literature of their own, because the stories and the poetry of the Britons crept afterwards into English literature and had a great influence upon it. Moreover, in the later days of the Conquest, a great number of the Welsh were amalgamated with the English. The whole tale of King Arthur, of which English poetry and even English prose is so full, was a British tale. Some then of the imaginative work of the conquered afterwards took captive their fierce conquerors.

3. **The English Tongue.** — The earliest form of our English tongue is very different from modern English in form, pronunciation, and appearance; but still the lan-

guage written in the year 700 is the same as that in which the prose of the Bible is written, just as much as the tree planted a hundred years ago is the same tree to-day. It is this sameness of language, as well as the sameness of national spirit, which makes our literature one literature for 1200 years.

4. **Of English Literature written in this tongue** we have no extant prose until the time of King Ælfred. Men like Bæda and Ealdhelm wrote their prose in Latin. But we have, in a few manuscripts, a great deal of poetry written in English, chiefly before the days of Ælfred. There is (1) the MS. under the name of *Cædmon's Paraphrase*, a collection of religious poems by various writers, now in the Bodleian. There is (2) the MS. of *Beowulf* and of the last three books of *Judith*. There is (3) the *Exeter Book*, a miscellaneous collection of poems, left by Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, to his cathedral church in the year 1071. There is (4) the *Vercelli Book*, discovered at Vercelli in the year 1822, in which, along with homilies, there is a collection of six poems. A few leaflets complete the list of the MSS. containing poems earlier than Ælfred. All together they constitute a vernacular poetry which consists of more than twenty thousand lines.

5. **The metre of the poems** is essentially the same, unlike any modern metre, without rhyme, and without any fixed number of syllables. Its essential elements were accent and alliteration. Every verse is divided into two half-verses by a pause, and has four accented syllables,

while the number of unaccented syllables is indifferent. These half-verses are linked together by alliteration. The two accented syllables of the first half, and one of the accented syllables in the second half, begin with the same consonant, or with vowels which were generally different one from another. This is the formal rule. But to give a greater freedom there is often only one alliterative letter in the first half-verse. Here is an example of the usual form: —

> And *d*eáw-*d*rîas: on *d*æge weorðeð
> Winde geondsâwen.
>
> And the *d*ew-*d*ownfall: at the *d*ay-break is
> Winnowed by the wind.

This metre was continually varied, and was capable, chiefly by the addition of unaccented syllables, of many harmonious changes. The length of the lines depended on the nature of the things described, or on the rise and fall of the singer's emotion; the emphatic words in which the chief thought lay were accented and alliterated, and probably received an additional force by the beat of the hand upon the harp. All the poetry was sung, and the poet could alter, as he sang, the movement of the verse. But, however the metre was varied, it was not varied arbitrarily. It followed clear rules, and all its developments were built on the simple original type of four accents and three alliterated syllables. This was the vehicle, interspersed with some rare instances in which rhymes were employed, in which all English poetry was

sung and written till the French system of rhymes, metres, and accents was transferred to the English tongue; and it continued, alongside of the French system, to be used, sometimes much and sometimes little, until the sixteenth century. Nor, though its use was finished then, was its influence lost. Its habits, especially alliteration, have entered into all English poetry.

6. **The Characters of this Poetry.** — (1) It is marked by parallelism. It frequently repeats the same statement or thought in different ways. But this is not so common as it is, for example, in Hebrew poetry. (2) It uses the ordinary metaphorical phrases of Teutonic poetry, such as the *whale's-road* for the sea, but uses them with greater moderation or with less inventiveness than the Icelandic poets. Elaborate similes are not found in the earlier poetry, but later poets, Cynewulf especially, invent them, not frequently, but well. (3) A great variety of compound words, chiefly adjectives, also characterise it, by the use of which the poet strove to express with brevity a number of qualities belonging to his subject. When Tennyson used such adjectives as *hollow-vaulted*, *dainty-woeful*, he was returning to the custom of his ancient predecessors. (4) At times the poetry is concise and direct, but this is chiefly found in those parts of the poems which have some relation to heathen times. For the most part, save when the subject is war or sea-voyaging, the poetry is diffuse, and wearies by a constant repetition. But we owe a great deal of this repetition to the introduction of extempore matter

by the bards as they sung. There is not much of it in poems which have been carefully edited, as many were in the time of Ælfred. Nor do I think that the original lays which the bards expanded were more diffuse than the early Icelandic lays. (5) It is the earliest extant body of poetry in any modern language. It began to be written in England towards the close of the seventh century, and all its best work was done before the close of the eighth. (6) Its width of range is very remarkable. The epic is represented in it by *Beowulf*. *Judith* is an heroic saga. The earlier *Genesis* is a paraphrase with original episodes. The later *Genesis* is an epic fragment with dramatic conversations, and in other poems there are traces of what might have formed a basis for a dramatic literature. The *Exodus* is an heroic narrative, freely invented on the Biblical story. The *Christ* of Cynewulf is a threefold poem, conceived like a trilogy, in the honour of Christ, the Hero. Narrative poetry is represented by Cynewulf's poems of the life of Saint Guðlac, of the martyrdom of Saint Juliana, by the *Elene* and the *Andreas*. There is one pure lyric, and there are sacred hymns of joy among Cynewulf's poems which have all the quality of lyrics. There are five elegiac poems. There are a number of Riddles, some of which are poems of pure natural description. There are didactic, gnomic, and allegorical poems. Almost every form of poetry is represented. (7) It is the only early poetry which has poems wholly dedicated to descriptions of nature. Of such descriptions there is no

trace in the Icelandic poetry. For anything resembling them we must look forward to the nineteenth century. (8) Many of the poems are extraordinarily modern in feeling. The hymns of Cynewulf might have been written by Crashaw. The sentiment of the *Wanderer* and the *Ruin* might belong to this century. The *Seafarer* has the same note of feeling for the sea which prevails in the sea-poetry of Swinburne and Tennyson. (9) There is no trace of any Norse influence or religion on early English poetry. Old Saxon poetry influenced the later English verse, but may itself have been derived from England. The poetry of natural description owes much to the Celtic influence which was largely present in Northumbria, but otherwise there is no Celtic note in early English poetry. There is a classic note. Virgil and other Latin poets were read by those whom Bæda taught, and the ancient models had their wonted power. The unexpected strain of culture, so remarkable in this poetry, must, I think, be due to this influence. (10) The greater part of this poetry was written in Northumbria, and before the coming of the Danes. This has been questioned, but it seems not wisely. The only examples of any importance outside of this statement are the war-lyrics in the *Chronicle* and that portion of the Cædmonic poems which it is now believed was translated from an Old Saxon original, probably in the time of Ælfred.

7. **The First English Poems.** — Our forefathers, while as yet they were heathen and lived on the Continent,

made poems, and of this poetry we *may* possess a few remains. The earliest is The Song of the Traveller — *Widsith*, the far-goer — but it has been filled up by later insertions. It is not much more than a catalogue of the folk and the places whither the minstrel said he went with the Goths, but when he expands concerning himself, he shows so pleasant a pride in his art that he wins our sympathy. *Deor's Complaint* is another of these poems. Its form is that of a true lyric. The writer is a bard at the court of the Heodenings, from whom his rival takes his place and goods. He writes this complaint to comfort his heart. Weland, Beadohild, Theodric knew care and sorrow. "*That* they overwent, *this* also may I." This is the refrain of all the verses of our first, and, I may say, our only early English lyric. The *Fight at Finsburg* is an epic fragment. It tells, and with all the fire of war, of the attack on Fin's palace in Friesland, and another part of the same story is to be found in *Beowulf*. It is plain there was a full Fin-saga, portions of which were sung at feasts. This completes, with those parts of *Beowulf* which we may refer to heathen traditionary songs, the list of the English poetry which we may possibly say belonged to the older England over seas. There are two fragments of a romance of *Waldhere* of the date or place of which we know nothing. In the so-called *Rune Song* — which, as we have it, is not old — there is one verse at least which alludes to the times of the heroic sagas. But the poems where we

find most traces of early English paganism are the so-called *Charms*.

8. **Beowulf** is our old English epic, and it recounts the great deeds and death of Beowulf. It may have arisen before the English conquest of Britain in the shape of short songs about the hero, and we can trace, perhaps, three different centres for the story. The scenery is laid among the Danes in Seeland and among the Geats in South Sweden, on the coast of the North Sea and the Kattegat. There is not a word about our England in the poem. Coming to England in the form of short poems, it was wrought together into a complete tale of two parts, the first of which we may again divide into two; and was afterwards edited, with a few Christian applications, and probably by a Northumbrian poet, in the eighth century. In this form we possess it.

The story is of Hrothgar, one of the kingly race of Jutland, who builds his hall, Heorot, near the sea, on the edge of the moorland. A monster called Grendel, half-human, half-fiend, dwells in a sea-cave, near the moor over which he wanders by night, and hating the festive noise, carries off thirty of the thegns of Hrothgar and devours them. He then haunts the hall at night, and after twelve years of this distress, Beowulf, thegn of Hygelac, sails from Sweden to bring help to Hrothgar, and at night, when Grendel breaks into the hall, wrestles with him, tears away his arm, and the fiend flies away to die. The second division of the first part of the poem begins with the vengeance taken by Grendel's

mother. She slays Æschere, a trusty thegn of Hrothgar. Then Beowulf descends into her sea-cave and slays her also; feasts in triumph with Hrothgar, and returns to his own land. The second part of the poem opens fifty years later. Beowulf is now king; his land is happy under his rule. But his fate is at hand. A fire-drake, who guards a treasure, is robbed and comes from his den to harry and burn the country. The gray-haired king goes forth to fight his last fight, slays the dragon, but dies of its fiery breath, and the poem closes with the tale of his burial, burned on a lofty pyre on the top of Hronesnæs.

Its social interest lies in what it tells us of the manners and customs of our forefathers before they came to England. Their mode of life in peace and war is described; their ships, their towns, the scenery in which they lived, their feasts, amusements — we have the account of a whole day from morning to night — the close union between the chieftain and his war-brothers; their women and the reverence given them; the way in which they faced death, in which they sang, in which they gave gifts and rewards. The story is told with Homeric directness and simplicity, but not with Homeric rapidity. A deep fatalism broods over it. "Wyrd (the fate-goddess) goes ever as it must," Beowulf says, when he thinks he may be torn to pieces by Grendel. "It shall be," he cries when he goes to fight the dragon, "for us in the fight as Wyrd shall foresee." But a daring spirit fills the fatalism. "Let him who can," he says, "gain honour

ere he die." "Let us have fame or death." Out of the fatalism naturally grew the dignity and much of the pathos of the poem. It is most poetical in the vivid character-drawing of men and women, and especially in the character of the hero, both in his youth and in his age; in the fateful pathos of the old man's last fight for his country against certain death, in the noble scene of the burial, in the versing of the grave and courteous interchange of human feeling between the personages. Moreover, the descriptions of the sea and the voyage, and of the savage places of the cliffs and the moor, are instinct with the spirit which is still alive among our poetry, and which makes dreadful and lonely wildernesses seem dwelt in — as if the places needed a king — by monstrous beings. In the creation of Grendel and his mother, the savage stalkers of the moor, that half-natural, half-supernatural world began, which, when men grew gentler and the country more cultivated, became so beautiful as fairyland. Here is the description of the dwelling-place of Grendel: —

There the land is hid in gloom,
Where they ward; wolf-haunted slopes, windy headlands
o'er the sea.
Fearful is the marish-path, where the mountain torrent
'Neath the Nesses' mist, nither makes its way.
Under earth the flood is, not afar from here it lies;
But the measure of a mile, where the mere is set.
Over it, outreaching, hang the ice-nipt trees:
Held by roots the holt is fast, and o'er-helms the water.

There an evil wonder, every night, a man may see —
In the flood a fire!
Not unhaunted is the place!
Thence the welter of the waves is upwhirled on high,
Wan towards the clouds, when the wind is stirring
Wicked weather up; till the lift is waxing dark,
And the welkin weeping!

The whole poem, Pagan as it is, is English to its very root. It is sacred to us, our Genesis, the book of our origins.

9. **Christianity and English Poetry.** — When we came to Britain we were great warriors and great sea pirates — "sea wolves," as a Roman poet calls us; and all our poetry down to the present day is full of war, and still more of the sea. No nation has ever written so much sea-poetry. But we were more than mere warriors. We were a home-loving people when we got settled either in Sleswick or in England, and all our literature from the first writings to the last is full of domestic love, the dearness of home, and the ties of kinsfolk. We were a religious people, even as heathen, still more so when we became Christian, and our poetry is as much of religion as of war. But with Christianity a new spirit entered into English poetry. The war spirit did not decay, but into the song steals a softer element. The fatalism is modified by the faith that the fate is the will of a good God. The sorrow is not less, but it is relieved by an onlook of joy. The triumph over enemies is not less, but even more exulting, for it is the triumph of God over His foes that is sung by Cædmon and Cynewulf. Nor is the

imaginative delight in legends and in the supernatural less. But it is now found in the legends of the saints, in the miracles and visions of angels that Bæda tells of the Christian heroes, in fantastic allegories of spiritual things, like the poems of the *Phœnix* and the *Whale*. The love of nature lasted, but it dwells now rather on gentle than on savage scenery. The human sorrow for the hardness of life is more tender, and when the poems speak of the love of home, it is with an added grace. One little bit still lives for us out of the older world.

> Dear the welcomed one
> To his Frisian wife, when his Floater's drawn on shore,
> When his keel comes back, and her man returns to home;
> Hers, her own food-giver. And she prays him in,
> Washes then his weedy coat, and new weeds puts on him!
> O lythe it is on land to him whom his love constrains.

If that was the soft note of home in a Pagan time, it was softer still when Christianity had mellowed manners. Yet, with all this, the ancient faith still influences the Christian song. Christ is not only the Saviour, but the Hero who goes forth against the dragon. His overthrow of the fiends is described in much the same terms as that of Beowulf's wrestling with Grendel. "Bitterly grim, gripped them in his wrath." The death of Christ, at which the universe trembles and weeps, was mixed up afterwards with the story of the death of Balder. The old poetry penetrated the new, but the spirit of the new transformed that of the old.

10. **Cædmon.** — The poem of *Beowulf* has the grave Teutonic power, but it is not, as a whole, native to our soil. It is not the first true English poem. That is the work of CÆDMON, and it was done in Northumbria. The story of it, as told by Bæda, proves that the making of songs was common at the time. Cædmon was a servant to the monastery of Hild, an abbess of royal blood, at Whitby in Yorkshire. He was somewhat aged when the gift of song came to him, and he knew nothing of the art of verse, so that at the feasts when for the sake of mirth all sang in turn he left the table. One evening, having done so and gone to the stables, for he had the care of the cattle that night, he fell asleep, and One came to him in vision and said, "Cædmon, sing me some song." And he answered, "I cannot sing; for this cause I left the feast and came hither." Then said the other, "However, you shall sing." "What shall I sing?" he replied. "Sing the beginning of created things," answered the other. Whereupon he began to sing verses to the praise of God, and, awaking, remembered what he had sung, and added more in verse worthy of God. In the morning he came to the town-reeve, and told him of the gift he had received, and, being brought to Hild, was ordered to tell his dream before learned men, that they might give judgment whence his verses came. And when they had heard, they all said that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. This story ought to be loved by us, for it tells of the beginning in England of the wonderful life of English Poetry. Nor should we

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fail to reverence the place where it began. Above the small and land-locked harbour of Whitby rises and juts out towards the sea the dark cliff where Hild's monastery stood, looking out over the German Ocean. It is a wild, wind-swept upland, above the furious sea; and standing there we feel that it is a fitting birthplace for the poetry of the sea-ruling nation. Nor is the verse of the first poet without the stormy note of the sea-scenery among which it was written, nor without the love of the stars and the high moorlands that Cædmon saw from Whitby Head. Cædmon's poems were done before 680, in which year he died. Bæda tells us that he sang the story of Genesis and Exodus, many other tales in the Sacred Scriptures, and the story of Christ and the Apostles and of Heaven and Hell to come. "Others after him tried to make religious poems, but none could compare with him for he learnt the art of song not from men, but, divinely aided, received that gift." It is plain then that he was the founder of a school. It is equally plain, it seems, from this passage, that at Bæda's death the later school of religious poets, of whom Cynewulf was the chief, had not begun to write. Cædmon's poems, then, were widely known. Bæda quotes their first verses. They were copied from monastery to monastery. Ælfred got them from the north, and no doubt gave them to the great schools at Winchester. They were however lost. Only their fame survived.

11. **The Junian Cædmon.**—Archbishop Ussher, hunting for books for Trinity College, Dublin, found an Old

English MS. which Francis Dujon (Junius) printed in Amsterdam about 1650, and published as the work of Cædmon, because its contents agreed with Bæda's description of Cædmon's poems and of his first hymn. Junius was a friend of Milton, and Milton was one of the first to hear what the earliest English poet was supposed to have written on the Fall of the Angels and the Fall of Man. Since then critics have wrought their will upon this MS. Some say that Cædmon did not write a line of it; others allow him some share in it. It pleases us to think, and the judgment is possible, that the more archaic portion of the first poem in the MS. — the *Genesis* — which describes the Fall of the Angels and the Creation, the Flood, and perhaps the battle of Abraham with the kings of the East is by Cædmon himself. In the midst of the *Genesis* there is however a second description of the Fall of the Angels and an elaborate account of the council in Hell, and of the temptation in the Garden. This is held to be an after-insertion, made perhaps in the time of Ælfred. It differs in feeling, in subtlety, and in manner of verse from the rest. A conjecture was made that it was a translation of a part of an Old Saxon poem, and this seems to be borne out by the discovery in 1894 of a fragment of Old Saxon poetry in which there are lines similar to those of this separated portion of the *Genesis*. The next poem in the MS. is the *Exodus*. It is certainly not by Cædmon. It is not a paraphrase; it is a triumphal poem of war, boldly invented, on the passage of the Red Sea. The *Daniel*, the third poem of the

MS., is so dull that it is no matter who wrote it or when it was written. The second part of the MS. is in a different handwriting from the first, and is a series of Psalm-like poems on the Fall of the Angels, the Harrowing of Hell, the Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, the Judgment Day, and the Temptation. They are a kind of *Paradise Regained.*

12. **The interest of these poems** is not found in any paraphrase of the Scriptures, but in those parts of them which are the invention of the poets, in the drawing of the characters, in the passages instinct with the genius of our race, and with the individuality of the writers. The account of the creation in the *older Genesis* has the grandeur of a nature-myth. The description of the flood is full of the experience of one who had known the sea in storm. The battle of Abraham is a fine clash of war, and might be the description of the repulse by some Northumbrian king of the northern tribes. The ruin of the angels and the peace of Heaven, set in contrast, have the same kind of proud pathos as Milton's work on the same subject. The *later Genesis* is even more Teutonic than the first. Satan's fierce cry of wrath and freedom against God from his bed of chains in Hell is out of the heart of heathendom. The northern rage of war and the northern tie of war-brotherhood speak in all he says, in all that his thegns reply. The pleasure of the northern imagination in swiftness and joy is just as marked as its pleasure in dark pride and in revenge. The burst of exulting vengeance when the thegn of Satan succeeds in the tempta-

tion is magnificent. His master, he cries, will lie softly and be blithe of heart in the dusky fire, now that his revenge is gained. There is true dramatic power in the dialogue between Eve and the fiend, and so much subtlety of thought that it cannot belong to Cædmon's time. It is characteristic of Teutonic manners that the motives of the woman for eating the fruit are all good, and the passionate and tender conscientiousness of the love and repentance of Adam and Eve is equally characteristic of the gentler and more religious side of the Teutonic nature. "Dark and true and tender is the North."

The *Exodus* is remarkable for its descriptions of war and a marching host, and especially for the elaborate painting of the breaking up of the sea, which was probably done by one who had himself battled with a whirling gale on the German Ocean. On the whole, we have in the two parts of the *Genesis*, and in the *Exodus*, in the midst of spaces of dulness, original and imaginative pieces of poetry well worthy of the beginnings of English song.

13. **English in the South.** — While Cædmon was still alive, Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his subdeacon Hadrian set up a celebrated school of learning at Canterbury, which flourished for a short time and then decayed. One of Theodore's scholars was EALDHELM. A young man when Cædmon died in 680, his name is connected with English poetry. As Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne he spread the learning of Canterbury over the south of England, and sent his in-

fluence into Northumbria, where his *Riddles* were imitated by Cynewulf. But our chief interest in him is that he was himself an English poet. It is said that he had not his equal in the making and singing of English verse. One of his songs was popular in the twelfth century. Ælfred had some in his possession, and a pretty story tells that when the traders came into the towns, Ealdhelm used, like a gleeman, to stand on the bridge or the public way and sing songs to them in the English tongue, that he might lure them by the sweetness of his speech to hear the word of God.

14. **English Poetry in the North after Cædmon—"Judith."**—We have seen that English poetry began with religion in the poems of Cædmon, and the greater part of the written poetry which followed him is also religious. One of the best of these pieces is the *Judith*. Originally composed in twelve books, we only possess the three last which tell of the banquet of Holofernes, his slaughter, and the attack of the Jews on the Assyrian camp. It is a poem made after Bæda's death, full of the flame and joy of war. Nor is the drawing of the person and character of Judith unworthy of a race which has always honoured women. She stands forth clear, a Jewish Velleda. To call the poem, however, as some have done, the finest of the Old English poems, is to say a great deal too much. We may date, about the same time, in the eighth century, a fine fragment on the *Harrowing of Hell*, some poems on Christian legends, perhaps the allegorical poems of the *Whale* and the

Panther, and some lyrical translations of the Psalms in the Kentish and West Saxon dialects.

15. **There are five Elegies** in the *Exeter Book*, which from their excellence deserve to be isolated from the rest of the minor poems. The first of these has been called the *Ruin*. It is the mourning of a traveller over a desolated city, and certain phrases in it seem to show that the city was Bath, utterly overthrown by Ceawlin in 577. If so, the date of the poem may be between 676 when Osric founded a monastery among the ruins, and 781 when Offa rebuilt the town. The second, the *Wanderer*, expands the mourning "motive" of the *Ruin* over the desolation of the whole world of man. It may have been originally a heathen poem, edited afterwards with a Christian Prologue and Epilogue. Of all the Old English poems it is the most of an artistic whole, and a noble piece of work it is. In its grave and fateful verse an exile bewails his own lost happiness and the sorrowful fates of men. The third, the *Seafarer*, apparently a dialogue between an old and a young sailor about the dangers and the fascination of the sea, breathes the spirit which filled the heart of our forefathers while they sang and sailed, and is extraordinarily modern in note. The blank-verse manner of Tennyson is in it, and the spirit of it is strangely re-echoed in the *Sailor Boy*. The same may be said of the two other elegies — the *Wife's Complaint* and the *Husband's Message*. They are not of so fine a quality as the *Wanderer* or the *Seafarer*, but they both have love-passion, otherwise

unrepresented in Old English poetry. To these must be added the dramatic monologue, formerly regarded as the *First Riddle*. As recently interpreted, it should be known as *Wulf and Eadwacer*.

16. **Cynewulf** was the greatest of the northern singers, and wrote, most people think, during the latter half of the eighth century. His name is known to us, and he is the only one of these poets of whose personality and life we have some clear image, and whose work is so wide in range and so varying in quality that it may be divided into periods. He has signed his name in its runic letters to four of his poems. The riddling commentary he linked on to the runes gives some account of his life, and the poems are throughout as personal as Milton's. He was often a wandering singer, but seems to have had, in his youth, a fixed place at the court of some northern noble — a wild and gay young man, a rider, a singer at the feasts, fond of sports and war, indifferent to religion, sensitive to love and beauty, and at home with all classes of men. It must have been during this time that he wrote the greater number of the *Riddles*. They prove that he had a poet's sympathy with the life of man and nature. They are written by one who knew the sea and its dangers, the iron coasts and storms of Northumbria, who knew and had taken part in war, who knew the forest-land, the scattered villages and their daily life; who loved the wild animals and the birds, and who, strange to say at this early time, wrote about nature with an observant and loving eye

and in a way we do not meet again in English poetry for many centuries. The poem on the Hurricane is an artistic whole, and may not be unjustly compared with Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*. There is scarcely a trace of Christianity in these early poems. Trouble then fell on Cynewulf, and with it repentance for his "sinful life," and he tells in the *Dream of the Rood* of how comfort was brought to him at last. He then turned to write religious poems, and to this part of his life we may allot the *Juliana*, and perhaps the first part of the *Guðlac*. He then wrote, and with a far higher art, the *Crist*, a long, almost an epical, poem of the Incarnation, the Descent into Hell, the Ascension, and the Last Judgment, a noble and continuous effort, full of triumphant verse. He had now reached full peace of mind, and as much mastery over his art as was possible at that early time. He may then have composed, from a poem now given to Lactantius, the allegorical poem of the *Phœnix*, in which there is a famous passage describing the sinless land; the second part of the *Guðlac*, as fine as the first is poor; and still later on in life, and with a free recurrence to the war-poetry of heathendom, the *Elene* and the *Andreas*, the first, the finding of the True Cross by the Empress Helena, and remarkable for its battle-fervour; the second equally remarkable for its imaginative treatment of the voyage of St. Andrew for the conversion of the Marmedonians. Then, before he died, and to leave his last message to his folk, he wrote, using perhaps part of an older

poem, the *Dream of the Holy Rood*, and showed that even in his old age his imagination and his versing were as vivid as in his youth.

17. **Poetry during and after Ælfred's Reign.** — When Ælfred set up learning afresh in the south, it had perished in Northumbria. But no great poetry arose in the south. There was alliterative versing, but it had neither imagination, originality, nor music. The English alliterative version of the *Metra* of Boethius may be Ælfred's own; if so, he was plainly not a poet. The second part of the *Genesis* may belong to this time, but it is asserted now to be a translation. I do not believe that the last poems in the Cædmonic MS. are of this time, but of the Northumbrian School. It was a time, however, of collections of the poetry of the past. Nearly all the Old English poetry, as we have it, is in the West-Saxon Dialect. Ælfred had a *Handbook*, into which, tradition says, he copied some English songs. It is extremely likely that the poems in the *Exeter Book* were brought together in Ælfred's time. In that book itself there are gnomic and didactic poems, as, for example, the *Fates of Men* and the *Gifts of Men*, which are collections of short verses belonging to various times, and some of them are very old. At a later period than Ælfred's reign, these gnomic verses took the form of dialogues, partly in prose and partly in verse, and we have two incomplete specimens of this in the *Solomon and Saturnus*, in which a Judaic legend is curiously mingled with Teutonic forms of thought. To the same period may be allotted the

Menologium, a poetical calendar, the best portions of which seem borrowed from the past. The rest of the verse up to the Conquest is chiefly made up of alliterative sermons and the war songs.

18. **The War-poetry** was probably always as plentiful as the religious, but was not likely to be written down by the monks. When, however, Ælfred developed the *Chronicle* into a national history, the writers seized on popular songs, and inserted them in the *Chronicle*. In that way we have at least one fine war-poem handed down to us — *The Song of Brunanburh*, 937. It describes the fight of King Æthelstan with Anlaf the Dane and the Scots under Constantine. Another war-poem is the *Fight at Maldon*, the story of the death of Byrhtnoth, an East Saxon Ealdorman, in battle with a band of Vikings. They are the fitting source, in their simplicity and patriotism, of such war-songs as the *Battle of the Baltic* and the *Siege of Lucknow*. Of the two the *Fight at Maldon* is the finer, the most human and varied, but the *Song of Brunanburh* is lyrical as the latter is not. They are two different types of poetry. Both of them have some Norse feeling, and we may link with them from this point of view the *Rhyme Song*, which recalls the motive and spirit of the earlier *Ruin*, but which, having rhymes along with alliteration, resembles the Scandinavian form called *Runhenda*, and has induced critics to attribute it to the influence of the warrior and scald, Egil Skalagrimsson, who twice visited King Æthelstan. Two fragmentary odes, among some other short poems, inserted

in the *Chronicle*, one on the deliverance of the five cities from the Danes by King Eadmund, 942; and another on the coronation of King Eadgar, are the last records of a war-poetry which naturally decayed when the English were trodden down by the Normans. When Taillefer rode into battle at Hastings, singing songs of Roland and Charlemagne, he sang more than the triumph of the Norman over the English; he sang the victory for a time of French Romance over Old English poetry.

19. **Old English Prose.** — It is pleasant to think that we may not unfairly make English prose begin with BÆDA. He was born about 673, and was like Cædmon, a Northumbrian. After 683, he spent his life at Jarrow, "in the same monastery," he says, "and while attentive to the rule of mine order, and the service of the Church, my constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or writing." He enjoyed that pleasure for many years, for his quiet life was long, and his toil unceasing. Forty-five works prove his industry; and their fame over the whole of learned Europe proves their value. His learning was as various as it was great. All that the world then knew of theology, science, music, rhetoric, medicine, arithmetic, astronomy, and physics was brought together by him; his *Ecclesiastical History* is our best authority for Early England; accuracy and delightfulness are at one in it. It reveals his charming character; and indeed, his life was as gentle, and himself as loved, as his work was great. His books were written in Latin, and with these we have nothing to do, but he strove to

make English prose a literary language, for his last work was a *Translation of the Gospel of St. John*, as almost his last words were in English verse. In the story of his death told by his disciple Cuthbert is the first record of English prose writing. When the last day came, the dying man called his scholars to him that he might dictate more of his translation. "There is still a chapter wanting," said the scribe, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself longer." "It is easily done," said Bæda, "take thy pen and write swiftly." Through the day they wrote, and when evening fell, "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the youth. "Write it quickly," said the master. "It is finished now." "Thou sayest true," was the reply, "all is finished now." He sang the "Glory to God" and died. It is to that scene that English prose looks back as its sacred source, as it is in the greatness and variety of Bæda's Latin work that English scholarship strikes its key-note.

When Bæda died, Northumbria was the centre of European literature. Wilfrid of York had founded libraries and monasteries, but the true beginner of all the Northumbrian learning was Benedict Biscop, who collected two brother libraries at Wearmouth and Jarrow, and whose scholars were Ceolfrid and Bæda. Six hundred scholars gathered round Bæda, and he handed on all his learning to his pupil Ecgberht, who as Archbishop of York established the famous library, and founded the great school, or, as it may be called, the University of York. To this place, for more than sixty years, all

Europe sent pupils to win the honey of learning. Alcuin, Ecgberht's pupil, finally took with him to the court of Charles the Great, in 792, all the knowledge which Bæda had won and the School of York had expanded. Through Alcuin then, whom we may call Charles's Minister of Education, England was the source of the new education which slowly spread over the vast sphere of the Frankish Empire. This was done just at the right moment, for Alcuin had scarce left the English shores for the last time when the Danes descended on Northumbria, and blotted out the whole of its literature and learning.

20. **Ælfred.** — Though the long battle with the invaders was lost in the north, it was gained for a time by Ælfred the Great in Wessex; and with Ælfred's literary work, learning changed its seat from the north to the south. Ælfred's writings and translations, being in English and not in Latin, make him, since Bæda's work is lost, the true father of English prose. As Whitby is the cradle of English poetry, so is Winchester of English prose. At Winchester the king took the English tongue and made it the tongue in which history, philosophy, law, and religion spoke to the English people. No work was ever done more eagerly or more practically. He brought scholars from different parts of the world. He set up schools in his monasteries "where every free-born youth, who has the means, shall attend to his book till he can read English writing perfectly." He presided over a school in his own court. He made himself a

master of a literary English style, and he did this that he might teach his people. He translated the popular manuals of the time into English, but he edited them with large additions of his own, needful as he thought, for English use. He gave his nation moral philosophy in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy;* a universal history, with geographical chapters of his own, "of the highest literary and philological value as specimens of his natural prose," in his translation of *Orosius;* an ecclesiastical history of England in Bæda's History, giving to some details a West-Saxon form; and a religious handbook, with a preface of his own, in the *Pastoral Rule* of Pope Gregory. He induced Bishop Werferth to translate into English the *Dialogues* of Gregory, a book which had a far-reaching influence on mediæval literature and theology. We do not quite know whether he worked himself at the *English* or *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but at least it was in his reign that this chronicle rose out of meagre lists into a full narrative of events. To him, then, we English look back as the fountain of English prose literature.

21. **The Later Old English Prose.** — The impulse he gave soon died away, but it was revived under King Eadgar the Peaceful, whose seventeen years of government (958–75) were the most prosperous and glorious of the West-Saxon Empire. Under him and his predecessors, Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester, founded and kept up English schools, and, working together with Archbishop Dunstan and Oswald of Worcester, recreated monastic

life, classic learning, and the education of the clergy. Their labours were the origin of the famous Blickling *Homilies*, 971. About twenty years after, Ælfric, called "Grammaticus" from his Englished Latin Grammar, began to write. He turned into English the Pentateuch, Joshua, and part of Job. The rest of his numerous works are some of the best models we possess of the literary English of the beginning of the eleventh century. The two collections of *Homilies* we owe to him, and his *Lives of the Saints*, are written in a classic prose, and his *Glossary and Colloquy*, afterwards edited by Ælfric Bata, served for a kind of English-Latin text-book. His prose in his later life was somewhat spoiled by his over-mastering fancy for alliteration, but he is always a clear and forcible writer of English. But this revival had no sooner begun to take root than the North-men came again in force upon the land and conquered it. We have in Wulfstan's (Archbishop of York, 1002–23) *Address to the English*, a terrible picture, written in im-passioned prose, of the demoralisation caused by the in-roads of the Danes. During the fresh interweaving of Danes and English together under Danish kings from 1013 to 1042, no English literature arose, but Latin prose intruded more and more on English writing. It was towards the reign of Edward the Confessor that English writing again began to live. But no sooner was it born than the Norman invasion repressed, but did not quench its life.

22. **The English Chronicle.**—One great monument,

however, of Old English prose lasts beyond the Conquest. It is the *English Chronicle*, and in it our literature is continuous from Ælfred to Stephen. At first it was nothing but a record of the births and deaths of bishops and kings, and was probably a West-Saxon Chronicle. Among these short notices there is, however, one tragic story, of Cynewulf and Cyneheard, under the date 755 — but the true date is 784 — so rude in style, and so circumstantial, that it is probably contemporary with the events themselves. If so, it is the oldest piece of historical prose in any Teutonic tongue. More than a hundred years later Ælfred took up the Chronicle, caused it to be edited from various sources, added largely to it from Bæda, and raised it to the dignity of a national history. The narrative of Ælfred's wars with the Danes, written, it is likely, by himself at the end of his reign, enables us to estimate the great weight Ælfred himself had in literature. "Compared with this passage," says Professor Earle, "every other piece of prose, not in these Chronicles merely, but throughout the whole range of extant Saxon literature, must assume a secondary rank." After Ælfred's reign, and that of his son Eadward, 901–25, the Chronicle becomes scanty, but songs and odes are inserted in it. In the reign of Æthelred and during the Danish kings its fulness returns, and growing by additions from various quarters, it continues to be our great contemporary authority in English history till 1154, when it abruptly closes with the death of Stephen. "It is the first history of any Teutonic people in their own language; it

is the earliest and most venerable monument of English prose." In it Old English poetry sang its last extant song, in its death Old English prose dies. It is not till the reign of John that English poetry, in any form but that of short poems, appears again in the *Brut* of Layamon. It is not till the reign of Henry III. that original English prose begins again in the *Ancren Riwle* (the Rule of Anchoresses), in the *Wooing of our Lord*, and in the charming homily entitled the *Sawles Warde*.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE CONQUEST TO CHAUCER'S DEATH, 1066–1400

23. **General Outline.** — The invasion of Britain by the English made the island, its speech, and its literature, English. The invasion of England by the Danes left our speech and literature still English. The Danes were of our stock and tongue, and we absorbed them. The invasion of England by the Normans seemed likely to crush the English people, to root out their literature, and even to threaten their speech. But that which happened to the Danes happened to the Normans also, and for the same reason. They were originally of like blood to the English, and of like speech; and though during their settlement in Normandy they had become French in manner and language, and their literature French, yet the old blood prevailed in the end. The Norman felt his kindred with the English tongue and spirit, became an Englishman, and left the French tongue that he might speak and write in English. We absorbed the Normans, and we took into our literature and speech the French elements they had brought with them. It was a process slower in literature than it was in the political history,

but it began from the political struggle. Up to the time of Henry II, the Norman troubled himself but little about the English tongue. But when French foreigners came pouring into the land in the train of Henry and his sons the Norman allied himself with the Englishman against these foreigners, and the English tongue began to rise into importance. Its literature grew slowly, but as quickly as most of the literatures of Europe. Moreover it never quite ceased. We are carried on to the year 1154 by the prose of the English Chronicle. There are traces in the Norman Chroniclers of the use they made of lost English war-songs. There are Old English homilies which we may date from 1120. The so-called *Moral Ode*, an English rhyming poem, was compiled about the year 1170. It made almost a school; it gave rise to some impassioned poems to the Virgin, and it is found in a volume of homilies of the same date. In the reign of Henry II., the old Southern-English Gospels of King Æthelred's time were modernised after 200 years or less of use. The *Sayings of Ælfred*, written in English for the English, were composed about the year 1200. About the same date the Old English Charters of Bury St. Edmunds were translated into the dialect of the shire, and now, early in the thirteenth century, at the central time of the strife between English and foreign elements, after the death of Richard I., the *Brut* of Layamon and the *Orrmulum* come forth within ten years of each other to prove the continuity, the survival, and the victory of the English tongue. When the patriotic struggle closed in the reign

of Edward I., English literature had again risen, through the song, the religious poems, the alliterative romance and homily, the lives of saints and the translations of French romances, into importance, and was written by a people made up of Norman and Englishman welded into one by the fight against the French foreigner. But though the foreigner was driven out, his literature influenced, and continued to influence, the new English poetry, for in this revival our literature was chiefly poetical. Prose, with but few exceptions, was still written in Latin.

24. **Religious and Story-telling Poetry** are the two main streams into which this poetical literature divides itself. The religious poetry is for the most part English in spirit, and a poetry of the people, from the *Orrmulum*, about 1215, to *Piers Plowman*, in which poem the distinctly English poetry reached its truest expression in 1362. The story-telling poetry may be called English at its beginning in the *Brut* of Layamon, but becomes more and more influenced by the romantic poetry of France, and in the end grows in Chaucer's hands into a poetry of the court and of fine allegory, a literary in contrast with a popular poetry. But Chaucer, at first thus influenced by French and then by Italian subjects, becomes at last entirely English in feeling and in subjects, and the *Canterbury Tales* are the best example of English story-telling we possess. The struggle then of England against the foreigner to become and remain England finds its parallel in the struggle of English poetry against the

influence of foreign poetry to become and remain English. Both struggles were long and varied, but in both England was triumphant. She became a nation, and she won a national literature. It is the course of this struggle we have now to trace along the two lines already laid down — the poetry of religion and the poetry of story-telling; but to do so we must begin in both instances with the Norman Conquest.

25. **The Religious Poetry.** — The religious revival of the eleventh century was strongly felt in Normandy, and both the knights and Churchmen who came to England with William the Conqueror and during his son's reign, were founders of abbeys, from which, as centres of learning and charity, the country was civilised. Where Lanfranc and Anselm lived, religion or scholastic learning was not likely to go to sleep. A frequent communication was kept up with French scholarship through the University of Paris. Schools and libraries multiplied. The Latin learning of England steadily developed. Its scholars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries wrote not only on theology, but on many various subjects; and some of their books influenced the whole of European thought. In Henry I.'s reign the religion of England was further quickened by missionary monks sent by Bernard of Clairvaux. London was stirred to rebuild St. Paul's, and abbeys rose in all the well-watered valleys of the north. Thus the English citizens of London and the English peasants in the country received a new religious life from the foreign noble and

the foreign monk, and both were drawn together through a common worship. When this took place a desire arose for religious handbooks in the English tongue. Orrmin's *Orrmulum* may be taken as a type of these. We may date it, though not precisely, at 1215, the date of the Great Charter. It is English; its sources are Ælfric and Bæda; its Danish writer loves his native dialect; not five French words are to be found in it. It is a metrical version of the Gospel of each day with the addition of a sermon in verse. "This book is named *Orrmulum* for that Orrm it wrought." It marks the rise of English religious literature, and its religion is simple and rustic. Orrm's ideal monk is "a very pure man, and altogether without property, except that he shall be found in simple meat and clothes." He will have "a hard and stiff and rough and heavy life to lead. All his heart and desire ought to be aye toward heaven, and to serve his Master well." This was English religion in the country at this date. It was continued in English prose writing by the *Ancren Riwle* — the Rule of the Anchoresses — written about 1220. The original MS. was probably in the Dorsetshire dialect. The *Genesis* and then the *Exodus*, biblical poems of about 1250, were made by the pious writers to make Christian men as glad as birds at the dawning for the story of salvation. A Northumbrian Psalter of 1250 is only one example out of many devotional pieces, homilies, metrical creeds, hymns to the Virgin (mostly imitated from the French), which, with the metrical

Lives of the Saints (a large volume, the lives translated from Latin or French prose into English verse), carry the religious poetry up to 1300. Among these the most important are the lives of three saints, *Marherete*, *Juliane*, and *Katerine*, and the homily on *Hali Meidenhad* (Holy Maidenhood) all in alliterative verse, written in southern England, and beginning a new and vital class of poetry, the poetry of impassioned love to Christ and the Virgin.

26. **Literature and the Friars.** — There was little religion in the towns, but this was soon changed. In 1221 the Mendicant Friars came to England, and they chose the towns for their work. The first Friars who learnt English that they might preach to the people were foreigners, and spoke French. Many English Friars studied in Paris, and came back to England, able to talk to Norman noble and English peasant. Their influence, exercised both on Norman and English, was thus a mediatory and uniting one, and Normans as well as English now began to write religious works in English. The people, of course, had to be served with stories, and in the early years of the fourteenth century a number of Christian legends of the childhood of Jesus, of the Virgin, the Apostles and Saints, and of miracles, chiefly drawn from the French, were put into varying poetic forms; and, recited everywhere, added a large number of materials to the imagination of England. A legend-cycle was thus formed, and this cycle was chiefly made by writers in the *south of England*. In 1303

Robert Mannyng of Brunne, in Lincolnshire, freely translated, to please plain people, a French work, the Manual of Sins (written thirty years earlier by William of Waddington), under the title of *Handlyng Synne*. William of Shoreham translated the whole of the Psalter into English prose about 1327, and wrote poems which might be called treatises in rhyme. The *Cursor Mundi*, written about 1320, in Northumbria, and thought "the best book of all" by men of that time, was a metrical recast of the history of the Old and New Testament, interspersed, as was the *Handlyng Synne*, with legends of saints. This book started a whole series of verse-homilies tagged with tales, which created in *northern England* a legend-cycle similar to that created in the south. Some scattered Sermons, and in 1340 the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (the Sting of Conscience), translated from the French, mark how *English prose* was rising through religion. About the same year Richard Rolle, the Hermit of Hampole, wrote in Latin and in Northumbrian English for the "unlearned," a poem called the *Pricke of Conscience*. This poem is the last distinctly religious poem of any importance before the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, unless we are led to except those written by the author of *The Grene Knight*. At its date, 1340, the religious influence of the Friars was swiftly decaying. In *Piers Plowman* their influence for good is gone. In that poem, which brings religious poetry, in the death of its author, up to 1400, the religious literature of England strikes the last note of

the old religious impulse and the boldest music of the new. The Friar is slain, the Puritan survives.

27. **History and the Story-telling Poetry.** — The Normans brought an historical taste with them to England, and created a valuable historical literature. It was written in Latin, and we have nothing to do with it till English story-telling grew out of it about the time of the Great Charter. But it was in itself of such importance that a few things must be said concerning it.

(1) The men who wrote it were called CHRONICLERS. At first they were only annalists — that is, they jotted down the events of year after year without any attempt to bind them together into a connected whole. Of these, the most important, and indeed they were something more than mere annalists, were Ordericus Vitalis, and his predecessors, Florence of Worcester and Simeon of Durham. But afterwards, from the time of Henry I., another class of men arose, who wrote, not in scattered monasteries, but at the Court. Living at the centre of political life, their histories were written in a philosophic spirit, and wove into a whole the growth of law and national life and the story of affairs abroad. They are our great authorities for the history of these times. They begin with William of Malmesbury, whose book ends in 1142, and die out after Matthew Paris, 1235–73. Historical prose in England is only represented after the death of Henry III. by a few dry Latin annalists till it rose again in modern English prose in 1513, when Sir

Thomas More's *Life of Edward V. and Usurpation of Richard III.* is said to have been written.

(2) *A distinct English feeling* soon sprang up among these Norman historians. English patriotism was far from having died among the English themselves. The *Sayings of Ælfred* were written in English by the English. These and some ballads, as well as the early English war-songs, interested the Norman historians and were collected by them. William of Malmesbury, who was born of English and Norman parents, has sympathies with both peoples, and his history marks how both were becoming one nation. The same welding together of the conquered and the conquerors is seen in Henry of Huntingdon and others, till we come to Matthew Paris, whose view of history is entirely that of an Englishman. When he wrote, Norman noble and English yeoman, Norman abbot and English priest, were, and are in his pages, one in blood and one in interests.

28. **English Story-telling** grew out of this historical literature. There was a Welsh priest at the court of Henry I., called GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, who, inspired by the Genius of romance, composed in Latin twelve short books (1132–35), which he playfully called History. He had been given, he said, an ancient Welsh book to translate which told in verse the history of Britain from the days when Brut, the great-grandson of Æneas, landed on its shores, through the whole history of King Arthur down to Cadwallo, a Welsh king who died in 689. The real historians were angry at the fiction, and declared

that throughout the whole of it "he had lied saucily and shamelessly." It was indeed only a clever putting together and invention of a number of Welsh and other legends, but it was *the beginning of story-telling* after the Conquest. Every one who read it was delighted with it; it made, as we should say, a sensation, and as much on the Continent as in England. Geoffrey may be said to have created the heroic figure of Arthur, which had been only sketched in the compilation which passes under the name of Nennius. In it the Welsh invaded English literature, and their tales have never since ceased to live in it. They charm us as much in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* as they charmed us in the days of Henry I. But the stories Geoffrey of Monmouth told were in Latin prose. They were put first into French verse by Geoffrey Gaimar for the wife of his patron, Ralph FitzGilbert, a northern baron. They got afterwards to France and, added to from Breton legends, were made into a poem and decked out with the ornaments of French romance. In that form they came back to England as the work of Wace, a Norman of Caen, the writer also of the *Roman de Rou*, who called his poem the *Geste des Bretons* (afterwards the *Brut*), and completed it in 1155, shortly after the accession of Henry II. Spread far and wide in France, it led to an immense development there and elsewhere of the Legend of Arthur and his Knights.

29. **Layamon's "Brut."** — In this French form the story drifted through England, and at last falling into the hands of an English priest in Worcestershire, he resolved

to tell it in alliterative English verse to his countrymen, and so doing became the writer of our first important English poem after the Conquest. We may roughly say that its date is 1205, ten years or so before the *Orrmulum* was written, ten years before the Great Charter. It is plain that its composition, though it told a Welsh story, was looked on as a patriotic work by the writer. "There was a priest in the land," he writes of himself, "whose name was Layamon; he was son of Leovenath: May the Lord be gracious unto him! He dwelt at Earnley, a noble church on the bank of Severn, near Radstone, where he read books. It came in mind to him and in his chiefest thought that he would tell the noble needs of England, what the men were named, and whence they came, who first had English land." And it was truly of great importance. The poem opened to the imagination of the English people an immense, though a fabled, past for the history of the island they dwelt in, and made a common bond of interest between Norman and Englishman. It linked also the Welsh to the English and the Norman. Written on the borders of Wales, it introduces a number of Briton legends of which Wace knew nothing, and of English stories also down to the days of Æthelstan. It enlarged Arthur before the eyes of men, and even Teutonic sagas enter into the story. In the realm of poetry all nations meet and are reconciled. Though a great deal of it is rendered from the French, there are not fifty French words in its 30,000 lines. The old English alliterative metre is kept up with a few rare rhymes.

In battle, in pathetic story, in romantic adventure, in invention, in the sympathy of sea and storm with heroic deeds, he is a greater and more original poet than those who followed him, till we come to Chaucer. He touches with one hand the ancient England before the Conquest, he touches with another the romantic poetry after it. Indeed, what Cædmon was to early English poetry, Layamon is to English poetry after the Conquest. He is the first of the new singers.

30. **Story-telling becomes entirely French in Form.**— After an interval the desire for story-telling increased in England, and France satisfied the desire. The French tales were carried over our land by the travelling merchant and friar, by the gleemen and singers who translated them, or sung translations of them, not only to the castle and the farm, but to the village and the town. *Floriz and Blancheflur* and the *Romance of Sir Tristrem* were versified before 1300, and many other romantic tales. The lay of *Havelok the Dane* was perhaps adapted from the French towards the close of the thirteenth century, and so was the song of *King Horn*. Their English origin is also maintained, and at least both rest on Teutonic tradition. The first took form in northern England, and shares in the rough vigour of the north. The second is a southern tale, and has been entirely transformed by the romantic spirit. English in rhythm, it is thoroughly French in feeling. The romances of *King Alexander* and of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, and of *Arthour and Merlin*, while romantic in form, preserve an English sentiment

and originality which make us remember that, when they were written, Edward I. was making Norman and English into one people. About 1300 the story-telling verged into historical poems, and Robert of Gloucester wrote his *Rhyming Chronicle*, from Brutus to Edward I. As the dates grow nearer to 1300, the amount of French words increases, and the French romantic manner of story-telling. In the Romance of *Alexander*, to take one example as a type of all, the natural landscape, the conventional introductions to the parts, the gorgeous descriptions of pomps, and armour, and cities, the magic wonders, the manners, and feasts, and battles of chivalry, especially the love affairs and feelings, are all steeped in the colours of French romantic poetry. Now this romance was originally adapted by a Frenchman about the year 1200. It took therefore nearly a century before the French romantic manner of poetry could be naturalised in English; and it was naturalised, curious to say, at the very time when England as a nation had lost its French attachments and become entirely English.

31. **Cycles of Romance.** — At this time, then, the French romance of a hundred years earlier was made English in England. There were four great romantic stories. The first was that of *King Arthur*, and Geoffrey of Monmouth began it in England about 1133. Before 1150 it was taken up in Normandy, sent therefrom into France, and independent invention soon began to play upon it. Of these inventors the first was Crestien of Troyes, but we owe to Robert de Boron, a knight of the

Vosges country, the first poem on the Graal, the Holy Dish with which Christ celebrated the Last Supper, and which in the hands of Joseph of Arimathea received his blood. The origin of the legend may be traced to Celtic stories, and this may partly account for its swift development in the west of England. Two more romances on the subject, *Le Grand St. Graal* and *La Queste del St. Graal*, in which Galahad appears, are attributed to Walter Map, a friend of Henry II., and they were certainly written in England in that king's reign. It is due to the Anglo-Normans and the Normans that this Graal-story, in which the Arthur legends were bound up with the highest doctrine of the Church, took its great development, not only in France but in Germany. Alongside of the Arthurian Saga arose the Tristan story, and, at first independent, it was afterwards linked on to the tale of Arthur. These two together, along with stories invented concerning all the Knights of the Round Table, and chiefly Launcelot and Gawaine, were worked over in a multitude of romantic tales, most of which became popular in England, and were sung and made into English verse from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

The second romantic story was that of *Charlemagne and his twelve peers*. Begun in France with the *Song of Roland*, a huge tale of Charlemagne was forged about 1110 in the name of Archbishop Turpin. In this, Charlemagne's wars were bound up with oriental legend, with the Holy Sepulchre, with every kind of story. A

great number of Carlovingian romances followed. This cycle, however, owing perhaps to the alienation of the Anglo-Normans in England from the French, was not much developed in England at the beginning of our romance-writing. The most popular of the Carlovingian poems was the poem of *Otinel* in the reign of Edward II.; but the most beautiful was *Amis et Amiloun*, the English version of which so wholly leaves out its connexion with Charlemagne that it has been supposed to be an original Anglo-Norman-English poem. The *Roland*, the *Charlemagne and Roland*, a *Siege of Milan*, *Sir Ferumbras* and the humorous *Rauf Coilyear* almost exhaust the English poems of this cycle.

The third Romantic story is that of the *Life of Alexander*, derived from a Latin version (fourth century) of the Greek story made in Alexandria under the name of *Callisthenes*. Its romantic wonders, fictions, and magic, largely added to from the Arabian books about Eskander, were doubled by the imagination and coloured with all the romance of chivalry in the eleventh or twelfth century; and the story became so common in England that "every wight that hath discrecioune," says Chaucer, had heard of Alexander's fortune. No doubt it was sung all over England, but we have only a few poems concerning it in English, the last of which, a free translation of a French original, *The Buik of the most noble and vailzeand Conquerour*, belongs to the fourth decade of the fifteenth century.

The fourth romantic story, first in date, but last in im-

portance in England, was that of the *Siege of Troy*. Two Latin pieces, bearing the names of *Dares Phrygius* and of *Dictys Cretensis*, composed about the story of Troy in the decline of Latin literature, were worked over by Benoit de Sainte More, with fabulous and romantic inventions of his own, in the *Roman de Troie*, about 1160. Guido della Colonne, of Messina, took them up about 1270, and with additions woven into them from the Theban and Argonautic stories, made a great Latin story out of them which Lydgate used. Virgil supplied materials for a romance of *Æneas;* Statius for a *Roman de Thebes*. During the crusades Byzantine and oriental stories entered into French romance, and especially into this Cycle of Troy. The *Gest Historiale* (XIV. Cent.) of the Destruction of Troy, first introduced the story of Troilus (invented by Benoit) to readers of English verse. This cycle does not seem to have much entered into our literature till Chaucer's time, but it attracted both Chaucer and Lydgate.

These were the four great Romantic cycles which were used by English poets. But the desire for romances was not satisfied with these. A few collected round Old English traditions or history. There was a poem about Wade, the father of Weland, to which Chaucer alludes. It has long been lost, but a small fragment of it has lately been discovered. I have already mentioned the stories of Horn and Havelok. The romances of *Guy of Warwick* and of *Bevis of Hampton*, though both translated from the French, take us back to the time of Æthelstan

and Eadgar, but are as unhistorical as the tales of Troy and Alexander. A number of other romances from various sources belong to the time of the Edwards, and were all derived from the French. Short tales also sprang up, taken from the *fabliaux*, from the *Roman de Renart*, from the French *lais*, some satirical, some of love, some in the form of "debates." Compilations of tales were made. The *Sevyn Sages* was worked from the oriental stock of the *Book of the Seven Wise Men;* and the *Gesta Romanorum*, a book of stories which began to be used in England in the reign of Edward I., supplied the material for tales in England as well as all over Europe. The country was therefore swarming with tales, chiefly French, and its poetic imagination with the fancies, the fables, the love, and the ornaments of French romance, translated and imitated in English, and written in the metres of France and in rhyme.

32. **Alliterative English Poems, 1350.**—In the midst of all this French imitation, something national begins to gleam, and it comes from the west, from the lands on the edge of Wales and Cumbria. This is the recovery of the Old English metre, that fine, elastic, marching, epic, alliterative metre which Layamon used, and which takes us back to Cynewulf. The things written now in this national metre are still romantic and French in subject, feeling, and manners; but their Teutonic metre slides a fresh, even a vigorous originality, into the conventional phrasing of the romantic poetry. This reaction from a French to an English type began in the middle

of the fourteenth century, and runs parallel with the general victory of the English language over the French in the time of Edward III. At least twelve important poems are written in this alliterative metre, the last of which in this century was Langland's *Vision*. Among these, but not altogether alliterative, are the poems of a northern, perhaps a Lancashire poet. These are *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight; Pearl;* and *Cleanness and Patience* (Clannesse and Pacience). This poet, who probably had finished his poems just as Chaucer and Langland began to write, stands quite apart from his fellows in excellence, and, indeed, along with Langland and only below Chaucer. Though *Sir Gawayne* is romantic, it escapes at many points from the French spirit. It is more original, it is more imaginative, it is far more intense in feeling, than the ordinary romances. It describes natural scenery at first hand, and the scenery is that of the poet's own country. It is moral in aim, it is composed into an organic whole. It is full of new inventions. In the *Pearl*, our earliest *In Memoriam*, there is an extraordinary personal passion of grief and of religious exultation pervading a lovely symbolism, which is quite unique. The same strong personality, mixed with a more distinctly moral purpose, fills the writer's two other poems, and brings him as a religious poet into range with Langland on the one hand, and with Cynewulf on the other. No one can crudely mix him up with France. He is as English, at the last, as Langland or Chaucer.

33. **English Lyrics.** — In the midst of all this sto telling, like prophecies of what should afterwards be lovely in our poetry, rose, no one can tell how, so lyric poems, country idylls, love songs, and, later some war-songs. The English ballad, sung from to to town by wandering gleemen, had never altogeth died. A number of rude ballads collected round t legendary *Robin Hood*, and the kind of poetic liter ture which sang of the outlaw and the forest, and afte wards so fully of the wild border life, gradually took form. About 1280 a beautiful little idyll called the *Owl and the Nightingale* was written, probably in Dorsetshire, in which the rival birds submit their quarrel for precedence to the possible writer of the poem, Nicholas of Guildford. About 1300 we meet with a few lyric poems, full of charm. They sing of spring-time with its blossoms, of the woods ringing with the thrush and nightingale, of the flowers and the seemly sun, of country work, of the woes and joys of love, and many other delightful things. They are tinged with the colour of French romance, but they have an English background. This lyrical movement began with hymns to the Virgin and Christ, touched with the sentiments of Latin and Norman-French amorous poetry. These changed into frank love-poems in the hands of the wandering students. Many arose on the Welsh marches, and were tinged with Celtic feeling. Some are no doubt literary renderings of English folk-songs, such as "Sumer is ycumen in," "Blow, northerne wind," and are full of

love of women and love of nature. After these, a new type of religious lyrics blossomed, in which, as in all future English poetry, the love of nature was mingled with the love of God and the longing of the soul for perfect beauty. Satirical lyrics also arose, and the proverbial poetry of France gave an impulse to collections like the *Proverbs of Hendyng*. Most of these were of the time of Henry III. and Edward I. Political ballads now began, in Edward I.'s reign, to be frequently written in English, but the only dateable ballads of importance are that on the battle of Lewes, 1264, and the ten war lyrics of Laurence Minot, who, in 1352, sang the great deeds and battles of Edward III.

34. **The King's English.** — After the Conquest, French or Latin was the language of the literary class. The English tongue, spoken only by the people, fell back from the standard West-Saxon English of the *Chronicle* into that broken state of anarchy in which each part of the country has its own dialect, and each writer uses the dialect of his own dwelling-place. All the poems then of which we have spoken were written in dialects of English, not in a fixed English common to all writers. During the prevalence of French, and the continued translation of French poems, English had been invaded by French words, and though it had become, in Edward III.'s reign, the national tongue, it had been transformed as a language. The old inflections had mostly disappeared. French endings and prefixes were used, till even so early as the end of Edward I.'s reign, in Robert of Brunne's

work, a third of his nouns, adverbs, and verbs, are French. His work was still however in a dialect — the East-Midland dialect. This dialect grew into the language of literature, *the standard English*. In Robert of Brunne, it was most literary and most French, but we must remember that the same dialect belonged to the two centres of learning, Oxford and Cambridge, and that London, on this side the Thames was contained in the same Anglian boundaries. This conquering dialect, when it became the standard English, did not prevent the *Vision concerning Piers Plowman* and Wyclif's translation of the Bible from being written in a dialect, but it became the English in which all future English literature was to be written. It was fixed into clear form by Chaucer. It was the language talked at the court and in the court society to which that poet belonged. It was the *King's English*, and the fact that it was the tongue of the best and most cultivated society, as well as the great excellence of the works written in it by Chaucer, made it at once the tongue of literature.

35. **Religious Literature in Langland and Wyclif.** — We have traced the work of "transition English," as it has been called, along the lines of popular religion and story-telling. The first of these, in the realm of poetry, reaches its goal in the work of William Langland; in the realm of prose it reaches its goal in Wyclif. In both these writers, the work differs from any that went before it, by its popular power, and by the depth of its religious feeling. It is plain that it represented a society

much more strongly moved by religion than that of the beginning of the fourteenth century. In Wyclif, the voice comes from the university and it went all over the land in the body of preachers whom, like Wesley, he sent forth. In Langland's *Vision* we have a voice from the centre of the people themselves; his poem is written in old alliterative English verse, and in the Old English manner. The very ploughboy could understand it. It became the book of those who desired social and Church reform. It was as eagerly listened to by the free labourers and fugitive serfs who collected round John Ball and Wat Tyler. It embodied a puritan reaction against the Friars who had fallen away from the religious revival they had so nobly instituted. The strongest cry of this regenerated religion was for truth as against hypocrisy, for purity in State and Church and private life, for honest labour, and against ill-gotten wealth and its tyrannical persecution. There was also a great movement at this time against the class system of the Middle Ages. This was made a religious movement when the equality of all men before God was maintained, and a social movement when it protested against the oppression of the poor and on behalf of their misery. The French wars had increased this misery. Heavy taxation and severe laws ground down the peasantry. The "Black Death" deepened the wretchedness into panic. In 1349, 1362, and 1369 it swept over England. Grass grew in the towns; whole villages were left uninhabited; a wild terror fell upon the people, which was added to by a fierce tempest in 1362 that to

men's minds told of the wrath of God. In their panic then, as well as in their pain, they fled to religion.

36. **Piers Plowman.** — All these elements are to be found fully represented in the *Vision of William concerning Piers Plowman*, followed by that concerning *Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest.* Its author, WILLIAM LANGLAND, though we are not certain of his surname, was born, about 1332, at Cleobury Mortimer, in Shropshire. His *Vision* begins with a description of his sleeping on the Malvern Hills, and the first text of it was probably written in the country in 1362. At the accession of Richard II., 1377, he was in London. The great popularity of his poem made him in that year, and again about the year 1398, send forth two more texts of his poem. In these texts he made so many additions to the first text that he nearly doubled the length of the original poem. In 1399, he wrote his last poem, *Richard the Redeless*, and then died, probably in 1400, and we may hope in the quiet of the West country.

37. **His Vision.** — He paints his portrait as he was when he lived in Cornhill, a tall, gaunt figure, whom men called Long Will; clothed in the black robes in which he sang for a few pence at the funerals of the rich; hating to take his cap off his shaven head to bow to the lords and ladies that rode by in silver and furs as he stalked in observant moodiness along the Strand. It is this figure which in indignant sorrow walks through the whole poem. The dream of the "field full of folk," with which it begins, brings together nearly as many

typical characters as the Tales of Chaucer do. In the first part, the truth sought for is righteous dealing in Church, and Law, and State. After the Prologue of the "field full of folk" and in it the Tower of Truth and the Dungeon where the Father of Falsehood lives, the *Vision* treats of Holy Church who tells the dreamer of Truth. Where is Falsehood? he asks. She bids him turn, and he sees Falsehood and Lady Meed, and learns that they are to be married. Theology interferes and all the parties go to London before the King. Lady Meed, arraigned on Falsehood's flight, is advised by the King to marry Conscience, but Conscience indignantly proclaims her faults, and prophesies that one day Reason will judge the world. On this the King sends for Reason, who, deciding a question against Wrong and in spite of Meed (or bribery), is begged by the King to remain with him. This fills four divisions or "Passus." The fifth Passus contains the confession of the Seven Deadly Sins, and is full of vivid pictures of friars, robbers, nuns, of village life, of London alehouses, of all the vices of the time. It ends with the search for Truth being taken up by all the penitents, and then for the first time Piers Plowman appears and describes the way. He sets all who come to him to hard work, and it is here that the passages occur in which the labouring poor and their evils are dwelt upon. The seventh Passus introduces the bull of pardon sent by Truth (God the Father) to Piers. A Priest declares it is not valid, and the discussion between him and Piers is so hot that the Dreamer awakes and

ends with a fine outburst on the wretchedness of a trust in indulgences and the nobleness of a righteous life. This is the first part of the poem.

In the second part the truth sought for is that of righteous life, to *Do Well*, to *Do Better*, to *Do Best*, the three titles of a new vision and a new pilgrimage. In a series of dreams and a highly-wrought allegory, *Do Well*, *Do Bet*, and *Do Best* are finally identified with Jesus Christ, who now appears as Love in the dress of Piers Plowman. *Do Well* is full of curious and important passages. *Do Bet* points out Christ as the Saviour of the World, describes His death, resurrection, and victory over Death and Sin. And the dreamer awakes in a transport of joy, with the Easter chimes pealing in his ears. But as Langland looked round on the world, the victory did not seem real, and the stern dreamer passed out of triumph into the dark sorrow in which he lived. He dreams again in *Do Best*, and sees, as Christ leaves the earth, the reign of Antichrist. Evils attack the Church and mankind. Envy, Pride, and Sloth, helped by the Friars, besiege Conscience. Conscience cries on Contrition to help him, but Contrition is asleep, and Conscience, all but despairing, grasps his pilgrim staff and sets out to wander over the world, praying for luck and health, "till he have Piers the Plowman," till he find the Saviour. And then the dreamer wakes for the last time, weeping bitterly. This is the poem which displays to us that side of English society which Chaucer had not touched, and which wrought so strongly in men's minds that its moral

influence was almost as widely spread as Wyclif's in the revolt which had now begun against Latin Christianity. Its fame was so great, that it produced imitators. About 1394, another alliterative poem was set forth by an unknown author, with the title of *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede;* and the *Plowman's Tale*, wrongly attributed to Chaucer, is another witness to the popularity of Langland.

38. **Wyclif.** — At the same time as the *Vision* was being read all over England, JOHN WYCLIF, about 1378, determined to give a full translation of the Bible to the English people in their own tongue. He himself translated the New Testament. His assistant, Nicholas of Hereford, finished the Old Testament as far as Baruch, and Wyclif completed it. Some time after, John Purvey, under Wyclif, revised the whole, corrected its errors, did away with its Latinisms, and made it a book of sterling English — a book which had naturally a great power to fix and preserve words in our language. But Wyclif did much more than this for our tongue. He made it the popular language of religious thought and feeling. In 1381 he was in full battle with the Church on the doctrine of transubstantiation, and was condemned to silence. He replied by appealing to the whole of England in the speech of the people. He sent forth tract after tract, sermon after sermon, couched not in the dry, philosophic style of the schoolmen, but in short, sharp, stinging sentences, full of the homely words used in his own Bible, denying one by one almost all the doctrines, and denouncing the practices, of the Church of

Rome. He was our first Protestant. It was a new literary vein to open, the vein of the pamphleteer. With his work then, and with Langland's, we bring up to the year 1400 the English prose and poetry pertaining to religion, the course of which we have been tracing since the Conquest.

39. **Story-telling** is the other line on which we have placed our literature, and it is now represented by JOHN GOWER. He belongs to a school older than Chaucer, inasmuch as he is scarcely touched by the Italian, but chiefly by the French influence. However, he had read Petrarca. Fifty *Balades* prove with what clumsy ease he could write in the French tongue about the affairs of love. As he grew older he grew graver, and partly as the religious and social reformer, and partly as the story-teller, he fills up the literary space between the spirit of Langland and Chaucer. In the church of St. Saviour, at Southwark, his head is still seen resting on his three great works, the *Speculum Meditantis*, the *Vox Clamantis*, the *Confessio Amantis*, 1393. It marks the unsettled state of our literary language, that each of these was written in a different tongue, the first in French, the second in Latin, the third in English. The first of these has been lost, but has lately been discovered at Cambridge. The second is a dream which passes into a sermon, cataloguing all the vices of the time, and is suggested by the peasant rising of 1381.

The third, his English work, is a dialogue between a lover and his confessor, a priest of Venus, and in its

course, and with an imitation of Jean de Meung's part of the *Roman de la Rose*, all the passions and studies which may hinder love are dwelt upon, partly in allegory, and their operation illustrated by apposite stories, borrowed from the *Gesta Romanorum* and from the Romances. But the book is in reality a better and larger collection of tales than was ever made before in English. The telling of the tales is wearisome, and the smoothness of the verse makes them more wearisome. But Gower was a careful writer of English; and in his satire of evils, and in his grave reproof of the follies of Richard II., he rises into his best strain. The king himself, even though reproved, was a patron of the poet. It was as Gower was rowing on the Thames that the royal barge drew near, and he was called to the king's side. "Book some new thing," said the king, "in the way you are used, into which book I myself may often look;" and the request was the origin of the *Confession of a Lover*. He ended by writing *The Tripartite Chronicle*. It is with pleasure that we turn from the learned man of talent to Geoffrey Chaucer — to the genius who called Gower, with perhaps some of the irony of an artist, "the moral Gower."

40. **Chaucer's French Period.** — GEOFFREY CHAUCER was the son of John Chaucer, a vintner, of Thames Street, London, and was born in 1340 or a year or two earlier. He lived almost all his life in London, in the centre of its work and society. When he was sixteen he became page to the wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence,

and continued at the court till he joined the army in France in 1359. He was taken prisoner, but ransomed before the treaty of Bretigny, in 1360. We then know nothing of his life for seven years; but from items in the Exchequer Rolls, we find that he was again connected with the court, from 1366 to 1372. He was made a valet of the king's chamber, and in 1368 an "esquire of less degree." It was during this time that he began to write. We seem to have evidence that he composed in his wild youthful days a number of love poems, none of which have survived, but which gave him some fame as a poet. It is said that the *A, B, C*, a prayer to the Virgin, is the first of his extant poems, but some are inclined to put it later. The translation of the *Roman de la Rose* which we possess is, with the exception of the first 1705 lines, denied to be his, but it is certain that he did make a translation of the French poem; and there are a few who think that Chaucer's translation was made about 1380, and that it is completely lost. It is commonly said that he wrote the *Compleynt unto Pite*, a tender and lovely little poem, before 1369. This was followed by the *Boke of the Duchesse*, in 1369, a pathetic allegory of the death of Blanche of Castile, whose husband, John of Gaunt, was Chaucer's patron. These, being written under the influence of French poetry, are classed under the name of Chaucer's first period. There are lines in them which seem to speak of a luckless love affair, and in this broken love it has been supposed we find some key to Chaucer's early life. However that

may be, he was married to Philippa Chaucer at some period between 1366 and 1374. Of the children of this marriage we only know certainly of one, Lewis, for whom he made his treatise on the Astrolabe.

41. **Chaucer's Italian Period.**—Chaucer's second poetic period may be called the period of Italian influence, from 1372 to 1384. During these years he went for the king on four, perhaps five, diplomatic missions. Two of these were to Italy—the first to Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, 1372–3; the second to Lombardy, 1378–9. At that time the great Italian literature which inspired then, and still inspires, European literature, had reached an astonishing excellence, and it opened to Chaucer a new world of art. His many quotations from Dante show that he had read the *Divina Commedia*, and we may well think that he then first learnt the full power and range of poetry. He read the Sonnets of Petrarca, and he learnt what is meant by "form" in poetry; but Petrarca never had the same power over him which Dante possessed. He read the tales and poems of Boccaccio, who made Italian prose, and in them he first saw how to tell a story exquisitely. Petrarca and Boccaccio he may even have met, for they died in 1374 and 1375, and Petrarca was in 1373 at Arquà, close to Padua, and employed on the Latin version of the story of Grisilde, the version which Chaucer translated in the Clerk's tale. But Dante he could not see, for he had died at Ravenna in 1321. When he came back from these journeys he was a new man. He threw aside the roman-

tic poetry much in vogue, and perhaps laughed at it then in his gay and kindly manner in the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, one of the *Canterbury Tales*. His chief work of this time bears witness to the influence of Italy. It was *Troilus and Criseyde*, 1380–3, a translation, with many changes and additions, of the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio. The additions (and he nearly doubled the poem) are stamped with his own peculiar tenderness, vividness, and simplicity. His changes from the original are all towards the side of purity, good taste, and piety. We meet the further influence of Boccaccio in the birth of some of the *Canterbury Tales*, and of Petrarca in the Tales themselves. To this time is now referred the *Lyf of Seint Cecyle*, afterwards made the Second Nun's tale; and the passionate religious fervour and repentance of this poem has seemed to point to a period of penitence in his life for his early sensuousness. It did not last long, and he now wrote the *Story of Grisilde*, the Clerk's tale; the *Story of Constance*, the Man of Law's tale; the Monk's tale; the *Compleynt of Mars;* the *Compleynt to his Lady; Anelida and Arcyte; Troilus and Criseyde;* the *Lines to Adam Scrivener; To Rosemounde; The Parlement of Foules; Boece*, a prose version of the *De Consolatione;* the *Hous of Fame*, and the *Legende of Good Women*. In these two last poems we may trace, not only an Italian, but a classical period in the work of Chaucer. This is the record of the work of the years between 1373 and 1384; and almost all these poems are either influenced by Dante or adapted

from Petrarca and Boccaccio. In the passion with which Chaucer describes the ruined love of Troilus or Anelida, some have traced the lingering sorrow of his early love affair. But if this be true, it was now passing away, for in the creation of Pandarus in the *Troilus*, and in the delightful fun of that enchanting poem the *Parlement of Foules*, a new Chaucer appears, the humorous poet of some of the *Canterbury Tales*. The noble art of the *Parlement*, as well as that of the *Troilus*, lifts Chaucer already on to that eminence apart where sit the great poets of the world. Nothing like this had appeared before in England. Nothing like it appeared again till Spenser. In the active business life he led during the period his poetry was likely to win a closer grasp on human life, for he was not only employed on service abroad, but also at home. In 1374 he was Comptroller of the Wool Customs, in 1382 of the Petty Customs, and in 1386 Knight of the Shire for Kent.

42. **Chaucer's English Period.** — It is in the next period, from 1384 to 1390, that he left behind (except in the borrowing of his subjects) Italian influence as he had left French, and became entirely himself, entirely English. The comparative poverty in which he now lived, and the loss of his offices in 1386, for in John of Gaunt's absence court favour was withdrawn from him, and the death of his wife in 1387, may have given him more time for study and the retired life of a poet. His appointment as Clerk of the Works in 1389 brought him again into contact with men. He superintended the

repairs and building at the Palace of Westminster, the Tower, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor, till July, 1391, when he was superseded, and lived on pensions allotted to him by Richard II. and by Henry IV., after he had sent Henry in 1399 his *Compleint to his Purse*. Before 1390, however, he had added to his great work its most English tales; those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Friar, the Nun's Priest, the Pardoner, and perhaps the Sompnour. The Prologue was probably written in 1388. In these, in their humour, in their vividness of portraiture, in their ease of narration, and in the variety of their characters, Chaucer shines supreme. A few smaller poems belong to this time, such as the *Former Age; Fortune; Truth; Gentilesse;* and the *Lak of Steadfastnesse*.

During the last ten years of his life, which may be called the period of his decay, he wrote some small poems, and along with the *Compleynt of Venus*, and a prose treatise on the Astrolabe, three more Canterbury tales, the Canon's-yeoman's, Manciple's, and Parson's. The last was written the year of his death, 1400. Having done this work he died in a house under the shadow of the Abbey of Westminster. Within the walls of the Abbey Church, the first of the poets who lies there, that "sacred and happy spirit" sleeps.

43. **Chaucer's Character.** — Born of the tradesman class, Chaucer was in every sense of the word one of our finest gentlemen: tender, graceful in thought, glad of heart, humorous, and satirical without unkindness; sensitive to

every change of feeling in himself and others, and therefore full of sympathy; brave in misfortune, even to mirth, and doing well and with careful honesty all he undertook. His first and great delight was in human nature, and he makes us love the noble characters in his poems, and feel with kindliness towards the baser and ruder sort. He never sneers, for he had a wide charity, and we can always smile in his pages at the follies and forgive the sins of men. He had a quiet and true religion, much like that we conceive Shakespeare to have had; nor was he without a high philosophic strain. Both were kept in order by his imagination and his humour. He had a true and chivalrous regard for women of his own class, and his wife and he ought to have been very happy if they had fulfilled the ideal he had of marriage. He lived in aristocratic society, and yet he thought him the greatest gentleman who was the most courteous and the most virtuous. He lived frankly among men, and as we have seen, saw many different types of men, and in his own time filled many parts as a man of the world and of business. Yet, with all this active and observant life, he was commonly very quiet and kept much to himself. "Flee from the press and dwell with steadfastness" is the first line of his last ballad, and it embodies, with the rest of that personal poem, the serious part of his life. The Host in the Tales japes at him for his lonely, abstracted air. "Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare, And ever on the ground I see thee stare." Being a good scholar, he read morning and night alone, and he says

that after his (office) work he would go home and sit at another book as dumb as a stone, till his look was dazed. While at study and when he was making of songs and ditties, "nothing else that God had made" had any interest for him. There was but one thing that roused him then, and that too he liked to enjoy alone. It was the beauty of the morning and the fields, the woods, and streams, and flowers, and the singing of the little birds. This made his heart full of revel and solace, and when spring came after winter, he rose with the lark and cried "Farewell, my book and my devotion." He was a keen observer of the nature he cared for, especially of colour. He loved the streams and the birds and soft grassy places and green trees, and all sweet, ordered gardens, and flowers. He could spend the whole day, he says, in gazing alone on the daisy, and though what he says is symbolic, yet we may trace through the phrase that lonely delight in natural scenery which is so special a mark of our later poets. He lived thus a double life, in and out of the world, but never a gloomy one. For he was fond of mirth and good-living, and when he grew towards age, was portly of waist, no poppet to embrace. But he kept to the end his elfish countenance, the shy, delicate, half-mischievous face which looked on men from its gray hair and forked beard, and was set off by his dark-coloured dress and hood. A knife and ink-horn hung on his dress; we see a rosary in his hand; and when he was alone he walked swiftly.

44. **The Canterbury Tales.** — Of his work it is not

easy to speak briefly, because of its great variety. Enough has been said of it, with the exception of his most complete creation, the *Canterbury Tales*. It will be seen from the dates given above that they were not written at one time. They are not, and cannot be looked on as a whole. Many were written independently, and then fitted into the framework of the Prologue. Many, which he intended to write in order to complete his scheme, were never written. But we may say that the full idea of his work took shape about 1385, after he had finished *The Legende of Good Women*, and that the whole existing body of the Tales was completed, with the exception of the last three already mentioned, before the close of 1390. At intervals, from time to time, he added a tale; in fact, the whole was done much in the same way as Tennyson has written his *Idylls of the King*. The manner in which he knitted them together was very simple, and likely to please the English people. The holiday excursions of the time were the pilgrimages, and the most famous and the pleasantest pilgrimage to go, especially for Londoners, was the three or four days' journey to see the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury. Persons of all ranks in life met and travelled together, starting from a London inn. Chaucer had probably made the pilgrimage to Canterbury in the spring of 1385 or 1387, and was led by this experience to the framework in which he set his pictures of life. He grouped around the jovial host of the Tabard Inn men and women of every class of society in England, set them on horseback to ride to Canterbury

and home again, intending to make each of them tell tales. No one could hit off a character better, and in his Prologue, and in the prologues to the several Tales, a great part of the new, vigorous English society which had grown up since Edward I. is painted with astonishing vividness. "I see all the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*," says Dryden, "their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark." The Tales themselves take in the whole range of the poetry and the life of the Middle Ages; the legend of the saint, the romance of the knight, the wonderful fables of the traveller, the coarse tale of common life, the love story, the allegory, the animal-fable, and the satirical lay. And they are pure tales. He is not in any sense a dramatic writer; he is our greatest story-teller in verse. All the best tales are told easily, sincerely, with great grace, and yet with so much homeliness, that a child would understand them. Sometimes his humour is broad, sometimes sly, sometimes gay, but it is also exquisite and affectionate. His pathos does not go into the far depths of sorrow and pain, but it is always natural. He can bring tears into our eyes, and he can make us smile or be sad as he pleases.

His eye for colour was superb and distinctive. He had a very fine ear for the music of verse, and the tale and the verse go together like voice and music. Indeed, so softly flowing and bright are they, that to read them is like listening in a meadow full of sunshine to a clear stream rippling over its bed of pebbles. The English in

which they are written is almost the English of our time; and it is literary English. Chaucer made our tongue into a true means of poetry. He did more, he welded together the French and English elements in our language and made them into one English tool for the use of literature, and all our prose writers and poets derive their tongue from the language of the *Canterbury Tales*. They give him honour for this, but still more for that he was so fine an artist. Poetry is an art, and the artist in poetry is one who writes for pure and noble pleasure the thing he writes, and who desires to give to others the same or a similar pleasure by his poems which he had in writing them. The things he most cares about are that the form in which he puts his thoughts or feelings may be perfectly fitting to the subjects: and that subject, matter, and form should be as beautiful as possible — but for these he cares very greatly; and in this Chaucer stands apart from the other poets of his time. Gower wrote with a set object, and nothing can be less beautiful than the form in which he puts his tales. The author of *Piers Plowman* wrote with the object of reform in social and ecclesiastical affairs, and his form is uncouth and harsh. Chaucer wrote because he was full of emotion and joy in his own thoughts, and thought that others would weep and be glad with him, and the only time he ever moralises is in the tales of the Canon's Yeoman and the Manciple, written in his decay. He has, then, the best right to the poet's name. He is, within his own range, the clearest of English artists.

Finally, his position in the history of English poetry and towards his own time resembles that of Dante, whom he loved so well, in the history and poetry of Italy. Dante embodied all the past elements of the Middle Ages in his work, and he began the literature, the thoughts, and the power of a new age. He was the Evening Star of the Mediæval day and the Morning Star of the Renaissance. Chaucer also represented mediævalism though in a much more incomplete way than Dante, but he had, so far as poetry in England is concerned, more of the Renaissance spirit than Dante. He is more humanistic than even Spenser. England needed to live more than a century to get up to the level of Chaucer. Lastly, both Dante and he made their own country's tongue the tongue of noble literature.

45. **The Travels of Sir John Maundevile** belong to this place which treats of story-telling. Whatever other English prose arose in the fourteenth century was theological or scientific. John of Trevisa had, among other English translations, turned into English prose, 1387, the *Polychronicon* of Ranulf Higden. Various other prose treatises, beginning with those of Richard Rolle, had appeared. Chaucer himself translated two of his tales, that of the Parson, and that of Melibœus, from the French into an involved prose; and wrote in the same rude vehicle, his *Boece*, and his book on the Astrolabe. We have already noticed the prose of Wyclif. But *Maundevile's Travels* is a story-book. Maundevile himself, the quaint and pleasant knight, is as

much an invention as Robinson Crusoe, and the travels as much an imposture as Geoffrey's *History of the Kings of Britain*. But they had a similar charm, and when made up originally by Jean de Bourgogne, a physician who died at Liège in 1372, were received with delight and belief by the world, and nowhere with greater pleasure than in England, where they were translated into English prose by an anonymous writer of the late fourteenth or more probably fifteenth century. The prose is garrulous and facile, gliding with a pleasure in itself from legend to travellers' tales, from dreams to facts, from St. Albans to Jerusalem, from Cairo to Cathay. The book became a model of prose, and may even be called an early classic.

CHAPTER III

FROM CHAUCER'S DEATH 1400, TO ELIZABETH, 1558

46. **The Fifteenth Century Poetry.** — The last poems of Chaucer and Langland bring our story up to 1400. The hundred years that followed are the most barren in our literature. The influence of Chaucer lasted, and of the poems attributed to him, but now rejected by scholars, some certainly belong to the first half of this century. There are fifty poems, making up 17,000 lines, which have been wrongly attributed to Chaucer, and though some of them were contemporary with him, a number are by imitators of his in the fifteenth century. Some of these have a great charm. *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* is a pleasant thing. *The Complaint of the Black Knight* is by Lydgate. *The Court of Love* and *Chaucer's Dream* are good but late imitations of the master. *The Flower and the Leaf* is by a woman whose name we should like to know, for the poem is lovely. "*Moder of God and Virgin undefouled*" is by Hoccleve, and was long attributed to Chaucer. The triple Roundel, *Merciles Beaute*, is given by Professor Skeat to Chaucer, and at least is worthy of the poet;

and the *Amorous Compleint* and a *Ballade of Compleynt*, may possibly be also his. There was then a considerable school of imitators, who followed the style, who had some of the imaginative spirit, but who failed in the music and the art of Chaucer.

47. **Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate.** — Two of these imitators stand out from the rest by the extent of their work. Hoccleve, a London man, was a monotonous versifier of the reigns of the three Henries, but he loved Chaucer well. In the MS. of his longest poem, the *Governail of Princes*, written before 1413, he caused to be drawn, with fond idolatry, the portrait of his "master dear and father reverent," who had enlumined all the land with his books. He had a style of his own. Sometimes, in his playful imitations of Chaucer's *Balades*, and in his devotional poetry, such as his *Moder of God*, he reached excellence; but his didactic and controversial aims finally overwhelmed his poetry.

48. **John Lydgate** was a more worthy follower of Chaucer. A monk of Bury, and thirty years of age when Chaucer died, he yet wrote nothing of much importance till the reign of Henry V. He was a gay and pleasant person, though a long-winded poet, and he seems to have lived even in his old age, when he recalls himself as a boy "weeping for naught, anon after glad," the fresh and natural life of one who enjoyed everything; but, like many gay persons, he had a vein of melancholy, and some of his best work, at

least in the poet Gray's opinion, belongs to the realms of pathetic and moral poetry. But there was scarcely any literary work he could not do. He rhymed history, ballads, and legends, till the monastery was delighted. He made pageants for Henry VI., masques and May-games for aldermen, mummeries for the Lord Mayor, and satirical ballads on the follies of the day. It is impossible here to mention the tenth part of his multifarious works, many of which are as yet unpublished. They are a strange mixture of the poet striving to be religious, and of the monk carried away by his passions and his gaiety. He may have been educated at Oxford, and perhaps travelled in France and Italy; he knew the literature of his time, and he even dabbled in the sciences. He was as much a lover of nature as Chaucer, but cannot make us feel the beauty of nature in the same way. It is his story-telling which links him closest to his master. His three chief poems are, first, *The Troye Book*, which is adapted from Guido's *Historia Trojana;* secondly, the *Storie of Thebes*, which is introduced as an additional Canterbury Tale, and is worked up from French romances on this subject. The third is the *Falles of Princes*, 1424–5, at which he worked till he was sixty years of age. It is a free translation of a French version of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium*. It tells the tragic fates of great men and women from the time of Adam to the capture of King John of France at Poitiers. The plan is picturesque; the sorrowful dead

appear before Boccaccio, pensive in his library, and each tells of his downfall. This is Lydgate's most important, but by no means his best, poem; and it had its influence on the future, for in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, at least eight Elizabethan poets united at different times to supplement his *Falles of Princes*.

A few minor poets do no more now than keep poetry alive. Another version of the Troy Story in Henry VI.'s time; Hugh de Campeden's *Sidrac*, Thomas Chestre's *Lay of Sir Launfal*, and the translation of the *Earl of Toulouse*, prove that romances were still taken from the French. William Lichfield's *Complaint between God and Man*, and William Nassington's *Mirrour of Life*, carry on the religious, and the *Tournament of Tottenham* the satirical, poetry. John Capgrave's translation of the *Life of St. Catherine* is less known than his *Chronicle of England* dedicated to Edward IV. He, with John Harding, a soldier of Agincourt, whose rhyming Chronicle belongs to Edward IV.'s reign, continue the historical poetry. A number of obscure versifiers, Thomas Norton, and George Ripley who wrote on alchemy, and Dame Juliana Berners' book on Hunting, bring us to the reign of Henry VII., when Skelton first began to write. Meanwhile poetry, which had decayed in England, was flourishing in Scotland.

49. **Ballads**, lays, fragments of romances, had been sung in England from the earliest times, and popular tales and jokes took form in short lyric pieces, to be accompanied with music and dancing. In fact, the ballad

went over the whole land among the people. The trader, the apprentices, and poor of the cities, the peasantry, had their own songs. They tended to collect themselves round some legendary name like Robin Hood, or some historical character made legendary, like Randolf, Earl of Chester. In the fourteenth century, Sloth, in *Piers Plowman*, does not know his paternoster, but he does know the rhymes of these heroes. Robin Hood was then well known in 1370. A crowd of minstrels sang them through city and village. The very friar sang them, "and made his English swete upon his tonge." The *Tale of Gamelyn* is a piece of minstrel poetry, of the forest type, and drew to it, as we know, the attention of Chaucer. Chaucer and Langland mention the French ballads which were sung in London, and these were freely translated. The popular song, "When Adam dalf and Eve span," was a type of a class of socialistic ballads. *The Battle of Otterbourne* and *The Hunting of the Cheviot* were no doubt composed in the fourteenth century, but were not published till now. Two collections of Robin Hood ballads and *The Nut Brown Maid*, printed about the beginning of the sixteenth century, show that a fresh interest had then awakened in this outlaw literature to which we owe so much. It was not, however, till much later that any large collection of ballads was made; and few, in the form we possess them, can be dated farther back than the reign of Elizabeth.

50. **Prose Literature.** — Four men continued English prose into the fifteenth century. The religious war be-

tween the Lollards and the Church raged during the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VI., and in the time of the latter REGINALD PEÇOCK took it out of Latin into homely English. He fought the Lollards with their own weapons, with public sermons in English, and with tracts in English; and after 1449, when Bishop of Chichester, published his works, *The Repressor of overmuch Blaming of the Clergy* and *The Book of Faith.* They pleased neither party. The Lollards disliked them because they defended the customs and doctrines of the Church. Churchmen burnt them because they agreed with the "Bible-men," that the Bible was the only rule of faith. Both abjured them because they said that doctrines were to be proved from the Bible by reason. Pecock is the first of all the Church theologians who wrote in English, and his books are good examples of our early prose.

SIR JOHN FORTESCUE'S book on the *Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, in Edward IV.'s reign, is less fine an example of the prose of English politics than SIR THOMAS MALORY'S *Morte Darthur* is of the prose of chivalry. This book, arranged and modelled into a labyrinthine story from French and contemporary English materials, is the work of a man of genius, and was ended in the ninth year of Edward IV., fifteen years before Caxton had finished printing it. Its prose, in its joyous simplicity, may well have charmed CAXTON, who printed it with all the care of one who "loved the noble acts of chivalry." Caxton's own work added to the prose of England. Born of Kentish parents, he went to

the Low Countries in 1440, and learned his trade. The first book said to have been printed in this country was *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, 1474. The first book that bears the inscription, "Imprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmynstre," is *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*. But the first English book Caxton made, and finished at Cologne in 1471, was his translation of the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, and in this book, and in his translation of *Reynard the Fox* from the Dutch, in his translation of the *Golden Legend*, and his re-editing of Trevisa's *Chronicle*, in which he "changed the rude and old English," he kept, by the fixing power of the press, the Midland English, which Chaucer had established as the tongue of literature, from further degradation. Forty years later Tyndale's New Testament fixed it more firmly, and the Elizabethan writers kept it in its purity.

51. **The Foundations of the Elizabethan Literature.** — The first of these may be found in Caxton's work. John Shirley, a gentleman of good family, and Chaucer's contemporary, who died, a very old man, in 1449, deserves mention as a transcriber and preserver of the works of Chaucer and Lydgate, but Caxton fulfilled the task Shirley had begun. He printed Chaucer and Lydgate and Gower with zealous care. He printed the *Chronicle of the Brut*; he secured for us the *Morte Darthur*. He had a tradesman's interest in publishing the romances, for they were the reading of the day; but he could scarcely have done better for the interests of the coming

literature. These books nourished the imagination of England, and supplied poet after poet with fine subjects for work, or fine frames for their subjects. He had not a tradesman's, but a loving literary, interest in printing the old English poets; and in sending them out from his press Caxton kept up the continuity of English poetry. The poets after him at once began on the models of Chaucer and Gower and Lydgate; and the books themselves being more widely read, not only made poets but a public that loved poetry. The imprinting of old English poetry was one of the sources in this century of the Elizabethan literature.

The second source was the growth of an interest in classic literature. All through the last two-thirds of this century, though so little creative work was done, the interest in that literature grew among men of the upper classes. The Wars of the Roses did not stop the reading of books. *The Paston Letters*, 1422–1509, the correspondence of a country family from Henry VI. to Henry VII., are pleasantly, even correctly written, and contain passages which refer to translations of the classics and to manuscripts sent to and fro for reading. A great number of French translations of the Latin classics were read in England. Henry V. and VI., Edward IV., and some of the great nobles were lovers of books. Men like Duke Humphrey of Gloucester made libraries and brought over Italian scholars to England to translate Greek works. There were even scholars in England, like John, Lord Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had won fame in the

schools of Italy, and whose translations of Cicero's *De Amicitiâ* and of Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico* prove, with his Latin letters, how worthy he was of the praise of Padua and the gratitude of Oxford. He added many MSS. to the library of Duke Humphrey. The two great universities were also now reformed; new colleges were founded, new libraries were established, Greek, Latin, and Italian MSS. were collected in them. The New Learning had begun to move in these great centres. A number of university men went to study in Italy, to Padua, Bologna, and Ferrara. Among these were Robert Flemmyng, Dean of Lincoln; John Gunthorpe, Dean of Wells; William Grey, Bishop of Ely; John Phreas, Provost of Balliol; William Sellynge, Fellow of All Souls, all of whom collected MSS. in Italy of the classics, with which they enriched the libraries of England. It is in this growing influence of the great classic models of literature that we find the gathering together of another of the sources of that Elizabethan literature which seems to flower so suddenly, but which had been long preparing.

52. **The Italian Revival of Learning.** — The impulse, as we see, came from Italy, and was due to that great humanistic movement which we call the Renaissance, and which had properly begun in Italy with Dante and his circle, with Petrarca and Boccaccio, with Giotto and Nicolo Pisano. It carried with it, as it went on reviving the thought, literature and law of Greece and Rome, the overthrow of Feudalism and the romantic poetry of the Middle Ages. It made classic literature and art the basis

of a new literature and a new art, which was not at first imitative, save of excellence of form. It began a new worship of beauty, a new worship of knowledge, and a new statesmanship. It initiated those new views of man and of human life, of its aims, rights, and duties, of its pleasures and pains, of religion, of knowledge, and of the whole course of the history of the world, which produced, as they fell on various types of humanity, the Reformation, a semi-pagan freedom of thought and life, the theories and ideas which took such furious form in the French Revolution, the boundless effort which attempted all things, and the boundless curiosity which penetrated into every realm of thought and feeling, and considered nothing too sacred or too remote for investigation by knowledge or for representation in art. At every one of those points it has affected literature up to the present day.

No sooner had Petrarca and Boccaccio started it than Italy began to send eager searchers over Europe and chiefly to Constantinople. For more than seventy years before that city was taken by the Turk, shoals of MSS. had been carried from it into Italy together with a host of objects of ancient art. Before 1440 the best Latin classics and many of the Greek, were known, and were soon studied, lectured on, imitated, and translated. By 1460 Italy, in all matters of thought, life, art, literature, and knowledge, was like a hive of bees in a warm summer. We have seen with what slowness this vast impulse was felt in England in the fifteenth century. But it had begun, and in Elizabeth's time, pouring into England, it

went forth conquering and to conquer. As France dominated the literature of England after the Conquest, till Chaucer, touched by Italy, made it English, so Italy dominated it till Shakespeare and his fellows, touched also by Italy, made it again English.

53. **There was now a Transition Period both in Prose and Poetry.** — The reigns of Richard III. and Henry VII. brought forth no prose of any worth, but the country awakened into its first Renaissance with the accession of Henry VIII., 1509. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, with William Lilly, the grammarian, set on foot a school where the classics were taught in a new and practical way, and between the year 1500 and the Reformation twenty grammar-schools were established. Erasmus, who had all the enthusiasm which sets others on fire, had come to England in 1497, and found Grocyn and Linacre at Oxford, teaching the Greek they had learnt from Chalcondylas at Florence. He learnt Greek from them, and found eager admiration of his own scholarship in Bishop Fisher, Sir Thomas More, Colet, and Archbishop Warham. From these men a liberal and moderate theology spread, which soon, however, perished in the heats of the Reformation. But the New Learning they had started grew rapidly, assisted by the munificence of Wolsey; and Cambridge, under Cheke and Smith, excelled even Oxford in Greek learning. The study of the great classics set free the minds of men, stirred and gave life to letters, woke up English prose from its sleep, and kindled the young English intelligence in the universities. Its earliest

prose was its best. It was in 1513 (not printed till 1557) that THOMAS MORE wrote the history in English, of Edward V.'s life and Richard III.'s usurpation. The simplicity of his genius showed itself in the style, and his wit in the picturesque method and the dramatic dialogue that graced the book. This stately historical manner was laid aside by More in the tracts of nervous English with which he replied to Tyndale, but both his styles are remarkable for their purity. Of all the "strong words" he uses, three out of four are Teutonic. More's most famous work, the *Utopia*, 1516, was written in Latin, but was translated afterwards, in 1551, by Ralph Robinson. It tells us more of the curiosity the New Learning had awakened in Englishmen concerning all the problems of life, society, government, and religion, than any other book of the time. It is the representative book of that short but well-defined period which we may call *English Renaissance before the Reformation*. We see in all this movement another of the sources of the Elizabethan outburst. Much of the progress of prose was due to the patronage of the young king. It was the king who asked Lord Berners to translate *Froissart*, a translation which in 1523 made a landmark in our tongue. It was the king who supported Sir Thomas Elyot in his effort to improve education, and encouraged him to write books (1531–46) in the vulgar tongue that he might please his countrymen. It was the king who made Leland, our first English writer on antiquarian subjects, the "King's Antiquary," 1533. It was the king to whom

Roger Ascham dedicated his first work, and who sent him abroad to pursue his studies. This book, the *Toxophilus*, or the *School of Shooting*, 1545, was written for the pleasure of the yeomen and gentlemen of England in their own tongue. Ascham apologises for this, and the apology marks the state of English prose. "Everything has been done excellently well in Greek and Latin, but in the English tongue so meanly that no man can do worse." But "I have written this English matter, in the English tongue for English men." Ascham's quaint English has its charm, and he did not know that the very rudeness of language of which he complained was in reality laying the foundations of an English more Teutonic and less Latin than the English of Chaucer.

54. **Prose and the Reformation.** — The bigotry, the avarice, and the violent controversy of the Reformation killed for a time the New Learning, but the Reformation did a vast work for English literature, and prepared the language for the Elizabethan writers, by its version of the Bible. WILLIAM TYNDALE'S *Translation of the New Testament*, 1525, fixed our standard English once for all, and brought it finally into every English home. Tyndale held fast to pure English. In his two volumes of political tracts "there are only twelve Teutonic words which are now obsolete, a strong proof of the influence his translation of the Bible has had in preserving the old speech of England." Of the 6000 words of the *Authorised Version*, still in a great part his translation, only 250 are not now in common use. "Three out of four of his

nouns, adverbs, and verbs are Teutonic." And he spoke sharply enough to those who said our tongue was so rude that the Bible could not be translated into it. "It is not so rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than the Latin; a thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into the Latin."

Tyndale was helped in his English Bible by William Roy, a runaway friar; and his friend Rogers, the first martyr in Queen Mary's reign, added the translation of the *Apocrypha*, and made up what was wanting in Tyndale's translation from Chronicles to Malachi out of Coverdale's translation. It was this Bible which, revised by Coverdale and edited and re-edited as *Cromwell's Bible*, 1539, and again as *Cranmer's Bible*, 1540, was set up in every parish church in England. It got north into Scotland and made the Lowland English more like the London English. It passed over to the Protestant settlements in Ireland. After its revisal in 1611 it went with the Puritan Fathers to New England and fixed the standard of English in America. Many millions of people now speak the English of Tyndale's Bible, and there is no book which has had, through the Authorised Version, so great an influence on the style of English literature and the standard of English prose. In Edward VI.'s reign also Cranmer edited the *English Prayer Book*, 1549–52. Its English is a good deal mixed with Latin words, and its style is sometimes weak or heavy, but on the whole it is a fine example of stately

prose. It also steadied our speech. LATIMER, on the contrary, whose *Sermon on the Ploughers* and others were delivered in 1549 and in 1552, wrote in a plain, shrewd style, which by its humour and rude directness made him the first preacher of his day. On the whole the Reformation fixed and confirmed our English tongue, but at the same time it brought in through theology a large number of Latin words. The pairing of English and Latin words (*acknowledge* and *confess*, etc.) in the Prayer Book is a good example of both these results.

55. **Poetry in the Sixteenth Century under the Influence of Chaucer.** — One source, we have said, of the Elizabethan literature, before Elizabeth, was the recovery, through Caxton's press, of Chaucer and his men. It is probable that the influence of Italian literature on English poets was now kept from becoming overwhelming by the strong English element in Chaucer. At least this was one of the reasons for the clear poetic individuality of England; and we can easily trace its balancing effect in Spenser. It was of importance, then, that before Surrey and Wyatt again brought Italian elements into English verse, there should be a revival of Chaucer, both in England and Scotland. This transition period, short as it was, is of interest. STEPHEN HAWES, in the reign of Henry VII., represented the transition by an imitation of the old work. Amid many poems, some more imitative of Lydgate than of Chaucer, his long allegorical poem, entitled the *Pastime of Pleasure*, is the best. In fact, it is the first, since the middle of the

fifteenth century, in which Imagination again began to plume her wings and soar. Within the realm of art, it corresponded to that effort to resuscitate the dead body of the Old Chivalry which Henry VIII. and Francis I. attempted. It goes back for its inspiration to the *Romance of the Rose*, and is an allegory of the right education of a knight, showing how Grand Amour won at last La Bel Puçell. But, like all soulless resurrections, it died quickly.

On the other hand, JOHN SKELTON represents the transition by at first following the old poetry, and then, pressed upon by the storm of human life in the present, by taking an original path. His imitative poetry belongs mostly to Henry VII.'s time, but when the religious and political disturbances began in Henry VIII.'s time, Skelton became excited by the cry of the people for Church reformation. His poem, *Why come ye not to Court?* was a fierce satire on the great Cardinal. That of *Colin Clout* was the cry of the country Colin, and of the Clout or mechanic of the town against the corruption of the Church; and it represents the whole popular feeling of the time just before the movement of the Reformation took a new turn from the opposition of the Pope to Henry's divorce. Both are written in short "rude rayling rimes, pleasing only the popular ear," and Skelton chose them for that purpose. He had a rough, impetuous power, but Skelton could use any language he pleased. He was an admirable scholar. Erasmus calls him the "glory and light of English letters," and Caxton says

that he improved our language. His poem, the *Bowge of Court* (rewards of court), is full of powerful satire against the corruption of the times, and of vivid impersonations of the virtues and vices. But he was not only the satirist. The pretty and new love lyrics that we owe to him foreshadow the Elizabethan imagination and life; and the *Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe*, which tells, in imitation of Catullus, the grief of a nun called Jane Scrope for the death of her sparrow, is a gay and inventive poem. Skelton stands — a landmark in English literature — between the mere imitation of Chaucer and the rise of a new Italian influence in England in the poems of Surrey and Wyatt. In his own special work he was entirely original. The *Ship of Fooles*, 1508, by Barclay, is of this time, but it has no value. It is a paraphrase of a famous German work by Sebastian Brandt, published at Basel. It was popular because it attacked the follies and questions of the time. Its sole interest to us is in its pictures of familiar manners and popular customs. But Barclay did other work, and he established the eclogue in England. With him the transition time is over, and the curtain is ready to rise on the Elizabethan age of poetry. While we wait, we will make an interlude out of the work of the poets of Scotland.

SCOTTISH POETRY

56. **Scottish Poetry** is poetry written in the English tongue by men living in Scotland. These men, though calling themselves Scotsmen, are of good English blood.

But the blood, as I think, was mixed with a larger infusion of Celtic blood than elsewhere.

Old Northumbria extended from the Humber to the Firth of Forth, leaving however on its western border a strip of unconquered land, which took in Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland in our England, and, over the border, most of the western country between the Clyde and Solway Firth. This unconquered country was the Welsh kingdom of Strathclyde, and was dwelt in by the Celtic race. The present English part of it was conquered and the Celts absorbed. But in the part to the north of the Solway Firth the Celts were not conquered and not absorbed. They remained, lived with the Englishmen who were settled over the old Northumbria, intermarried with them, and became under Scot kings a people with the Celtic elements more dominant in them than in the rest of our nation. English literature in the Lowlands of Scotland would then retain more of these Celtic elements than elsewhere; and there are certain peculiarities infused through the whole of English poetry in Scotland which are especially Celtic.

57. **Celtic Elements of Scottish Poetry.** — The first of these is *the love of wild nature for its own sake.* There is a passionate, close, and poetical observation and description of natural scenery in Scotland from the earliest times of its poetry, such as we do not possess in English poetry till the time of Thomson. The second is *the love of colour.* All early Scottish poetry differs from English in the extraordinary way in which colour is in-

sisted on, and at times in the lavish exaggeration of it. The third is *the wittier and coarser humour* in the Scottish poetry, which is distinctly Celtic in contrast with that humour which has its root in sadness and which belongs to the Teutonic races. Few things are really more different than the humour of Chaucer and the humour of Dunbar, than the humour of Cowper and the humour of Burns. These are the special Celtic elements in the Lowland poetry

58. But there are also **national elements** in it which, exaggerated and isolated as they were, are also Celtic. The wild individuality of the Gaelic clans was not unrepresented in the Lowland kingdom, and became there as assertive a nationality as Ireland has ever proclaimed. The English were as national as the Scots, but they were not oppressed. But for nearly forty years the Scots resisted for their very life the efforts of England to conquer them. And the war of freedom left its traces on their poetry from Barbour to Burns and Walter Scott in the almost obtrusive way in which Scotland, and Scottish liberty, and Scottish heroes are thrust forward in their verse. Their passionate nationality appears in another form in their descriptive poetry. The natural description of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or even Milton, is not distinctively English. But in Scotland it is always the scenery of their own land that the poets describe. Even when they are imitating Chaucer they do not imitate his conventional landscape. They put in a Scottish landscape; and in the work of such men as Gawin Douglas

the love of Scotland and the love of nature mingle their influences together to make him sit down, as it were, to paint, with his eye on everything he paints, a series of Scottish landscapes.

59. The first of the Scottish poets, omitting Thomas of Erceldoune, is JOHN BARBOUR, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. His long poem of *The Bruce*, 1375–7, represents the whole of the eager struggle for Scottish freedom against the English which closed at Bannockburn; and the national spirit, which I have mentioned, springs in it, full grown, into life. But it is temperate, it does not pass into the fury against England, which is so plain in writers like BLIND HARRY, who, about 1461, composed a long poem in the heroic couplet of Chaucer on the deeds of *William Wallace*. In Henry V.'s reign, ANDREW OF WYNTOUN wrote his *Oryginale Cronykil of Scotland*, one of the rhyming chronicles of the time. It is only in the next poet that we find the full influence of Chaucer, and it is thereafter continuous till the Elizabethan time. JAMES THE FIRST of Scotland was prisoner in England for nineteen years, till 1422. There he read Chaucer, and fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, niece of Henry IV. The poem which he wrote — *The King's Quair* (the quire or book) — is done in imitation of Chaucer, and in Chaucer's seven-lined stanza, which from James's use of it is called "Rime Royal." In six cantos, sweeter, tenderer, and purer than any verse till we come to Spenser, he describes the beginning of his love and its happy end. "I must write," he says, "so

much because I have come so from Hell to Heaven." Though imitative of Chaucer, his work has an original element in it. The natural description is more varied, the colour is more vivid, and there is a modern self-reflective quality, a touch of mystic feeling which does not belong to Chaucer.

ROBERT HENRYSON, who died about 1500, a schoolmaster in Dunfermline, was also an imitator of Chaucer, and his *Testament of Cresseid* continues Chaucer's *Troilus*. But he did not do only imitative work. He treated the fables of Æsop in a new fashion. In his hands they are long stories, full of pleasant dialogue, political allusions, and with elaborate morals attached to them. They have a peculiar Scottish tang, and are full of descriptions of Scottish scenery. He also reanimated the short pastoral in his *Robin and Makyne*. It is a natural, prettily-turned dialogue; and a flashing Celtic wit, such as charms us in *Duncan Gray*, runs through it. The individuality which reformed two modes of poetic work in these poems appears again in his sketch of the graces of womanhood in the *Garment of Good Ladies;* a poem of the same type as those thoughtful lyrics which describe what is best in certain phases of professions, or of life, such as Sir H. Wotton's *Character of a Happy Life*, or Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*.

But among many poets whom we need not mention, the greatest is WILLIAM DUNBAR. He carries the influence of Chaucer on to the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth. His genius, though masculine,

loved beauty, and his work was as varied in its range as it was original. He followed the form and plan of Chaucer in his two poems of *The Thistle and the Rose*, 1503, and the *Golden Terge*, 1508, the first on the marriage of James IV. to Margaret Tudor, the second an allegory of Love, Beauty, Reason, and the poet. In both, though they begin with Chaucer's conventional May morning, the natural description becomes Scottish, and in both the national enthusiasm of the poet is strongly marked. But he soon ceased to imitate. The vigorous fun of the satires and of the satirical ballads that he wrote is only matched by their coarseness, a coarseness and a fun that descended to Burns. Perhaps Dunbar's genius is still higher in a wild poem in which he personifies the seven deadly sins, and describes their dance, with a mixture of horror and humour which makes the little thing unique.

A man as remarkable as Dunbar is GAWIN DOUGLAS, Bishop of Dunkeld, who died in 1522, at the Court of Henry VIII., and was buried in the Savoy. He translated into verse Ovid's *Art of Love*, now lost, and afterwards, with truth and spirit, the *Æneids* of Virgil, 1513. To each book of the Æneid he wrote a prologue of his own. Three of them are descriptions of the country in May, in Autumn, and in Winter. The scenery is altogether Scottish, and the few Chaucerisms that appear seem absurdly out of place in a picture of nature which is painted with excessive care and directly from the truth. The colour is superb, but the landscape is not composed by any art into a whole. There is nothing like it in

England till Thomson's *Seasons*, and Thomson was a Scotsman. Only the Celtic love of nature can account for the vast distance between work like this and contemporary work in England such as Skelton's. Of Douglas's other original work, one poem, the *Palace of Honour*, 1501, continues the influence of Chaucer.

There were a number of other Scottish poets who are all remembered by Dunbar in his *Lament for the Makars*, and praised by SIR DAVID LYNDSAY, whom it is best to mention in this place, because he still connects Scottish poetry with Chaucer. He was born about 1490, and was the last of the old Scottish school, and the most popular. He is the most popular because he is not only the poet, but also the reformer. His poem the *Dreme*, 1528, links him back to Chaucer. It is in the manner of the old poet. But its scenery is Scottish, and instead of the May morning of Chaucer, it opens on a winter's day of wind and sleet. The place is a cave over the sea, whence Lyndsay sees the weltering of the ocean. Chaucer goes to sleep over Ovid or Cicero, Lyndsay falls into a dream as he thinks of the "false world's instability," wavering like the sea waves. The difference marks not only the difference of the two countries, but the different natures of the men. Chaucer did not care much for the popular storms, and loved the Court more than the Commonweal. Lyndsay in the *Dreme* and in two other poems — the *Complaint to the King*, and the *Testament of the King's Papyngo* — is absorbed in the evils and sorrows of the people, in the desire to reform the abuses of the Church,

of the Court, of party, of the nobility. In 1539 his *Satire of the Three Estates*, a Morality interspersed with interludes, was represented before James V. at Linlithgow. It was a daring attack on the ignorance, profligacy, and exactions of the priesthood, on the vices and flattery of the favourites — "a mocking of abuses used in the country by diverse sorts of estates." A still bolder poem, and one thought so even by himself, is the *Monarchie*, 1553, his last work. He is as much the reformer, as he is the poet, of a transition time. Still his verse hath charms, but it was neither sweet nor imaginative. He had genuine satire, great moral breadth, much preaching power in verse, coarse, broad humour in plenty, and more dramatic power and invention than the rest of his fellows.

60. **The Elizabethan Dawn: Wyatt and Surrey.** — While poetry under Skelton and Lyndsay became an instrument of reform, it revived as an art at the close of Henry VIII.'s reign in SIR THOMAS WYATT and LORD HENRY HOWARD, Earl of Surrey. They were both Italian travellers, and in bringing back to England the inspiration they had gained from Italian and classic models they re-made English poetry. They are our first really modern poets; the first who have anything of the modern manner. Though Italian in sentiment, their language is more English than Chaucer's, that is, they use fewer romance words. They handed down this purity of English to the Elizabethan poets, to Sackville, Spenser,

and Shakespeare. They introduced a new kind of poetry, the amourist poetry — a poetry extremely personal, and personal as English poetry had scarcely ever been before. The amourists, as they are called, were poets who composed a series of poems on the subject of the joys and sorrows of their loves — sonnets mingled with lyrical pieces after the manner of Petrarca, and sometimes in accord with the love philosophy he built on Plato. They began with Wyatt and Surrey. They did not die out till the end of James I.'s reign. The subjects of Wyatt and Surrey were chiefly lyrical, and the fact that they imitated the same model has made some likeness between them. Like their personal characters, however, the poetry of Wyatt is the more thoughtful and the more strongly felt, but Surrey's has a sweeter movement and a livelier fancy. Both did this great thing for English verse — they chose an exquisite model, and in imitating it "corrected the ruggedness of English poetry." A new standard was made below which the future poets should not fall. They also added new stanza measures to English verse, and enlarged in this way the "lyrical range." Surrey was the first, in his translation of the Second and Fourth Books of *Virgil's Æneid*, to use the ten-syllabled, unrhymed verse, which we now call blank verse. In his hands it is not worthy of praise. Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, introduced it into drama; Marlowe made it the proper verse of the drama. In plays it has a special manner of its own; in poetry proper it was, we may say, not only created but perfected by Milton.

The new impulse thus given to poetry was all but arrested by the bigotry that prevailed during the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary, and all the work of the New Learning seemed to be useless. But Thomas Wilson's book in English on *Rhetoric and Logic* in 1553, and the publication of Thomas Tusser's *Pointes of Husbandrie* and of Tottel's *Miscellany of Uncertain Authors*, 1557, in the last year of Mary's reign, proved that something was stirring beneath the gloom. The *Miscellany* contained 40 poems by Surrey, 96 by Wyatt, 40 by Grimoald, and 134 by uncertain authors. The date should be remembered, for it is the first printed book of modern English poetry. It proves that men cared now more for the new than the old poets, that the time of mere imitation of Chaucer was over, and that of original creation begun. It ushers in the Elizabethan literature.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

61. **Elizabethan Literature,** as a literature, may be said to begin with Surrey and Wyatt. But as their poems were published shortly before Elizabeth came to the throne, we date the beginning of the *early period* of Elizabethan literature from the year of her accession, 1558. That period lasted till 1579, and was followed by the great literary outburst of the days of Spenser and Shakespeare. The apparent suddenness of this outburst has been an object of wonder. I have already noticed its earliest sources in the last hundred years. And now we shall best seek its nearest causes in the work done during the early years of Elizabeth. The flood-tide which began in 1579 was preceded by a very various, plentiful, but inferior literature, in which new forms of poetry and prose-writing were tried, and new veins of thought opened. These twenty years from the *Mirror for Magistrates*, 1559, to the *Shepheard's Calendar*, 1579, sowed seeds which when the time came broke into flower. We wonder at the flower, but it grew naturally through seed and stem, leaves and blossom. They made the flower, since the

circumstances were favourable. And never in England, save in our own century, were they so favourable.

62. **First Elizabethan Period, 1558–1570.** — (1.) The literary prose of the beginning of this time is represented by the *Scholemaster* of ASCHAM, published in 1570. This book, which is on education, is the work of the scholar of the New Learning of the reign of Henry VIII. who has lived on into another period. It is not, properly speaking, Elizabethan; it is like a stranger in a new land and among new manners.

(2.) Poetry is first represented by SACKVILLE, Lord Buckhurst. The *Mirror for Magistrates*, for which he wrote, 1563, the *Induction* and one tale, is a series of tragic poems on the model of Boccaccio's *Falls of Princes*, already imitated by Lydgate. Seven poets at least, with Sackville, contributed tales to it, but his poem is poetry of so fine a quality that it stands absolutely alone during these twenty years. The *Induction* paints the poet's descent into Avernus, and his meeting with Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, whose fate he tells with a grave and inventive imagination, and with the first true music which we hear since Chaucer. Being written in the manner and stanza of the elder poets, this poem has been called the transition between Lydgate and Spenser. But it does not truly belong to the old time; it is as modern as Spenser, and its allegorical representations are in the same manner as those of Spenser. GEORGE GASCOIGNE, whose satire, the *Steele Glas*, 1576, is our first long satirical poem, deserves mention among a

crowd of poets who came after Sackville. They wrote legends, pieces on the wars and discoveries of the Englishmen of their day, epitaphs, epigrams, songs, sonnets, elegies, fables, and sets of love poems; and the best things they did were collected in such miscellaneous collections as the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, in 1576. This book, with Tottel's, set on foot both now and in the later years of Elizabeth a crowd of other miscellanies of poetry which represent the vast number of experiments made in Elizabeth's time, in the subjects, the metres, and the various kinds of lyrical poetry. At present, all we can say is that lyrical poetry, and that which we may call "occasional poetry," were now in full motion. The popular *Ballads* also took a wide range. The registers of the Stationers' Company prove that there was scarcely any event of the day, nor almost any controversy in literature, politics, religion, which was not the subject of verse, and of verse into which imagination strove to enter. The ballad may be said to have done the work of the modern weekly review. It stimulated and informed the popular intellectual life of England.

(3.) *Frequent translations* were now made from the classical writers. We know the names of more than twelve men who did this work, and there must have been many more. Already in Henry VIII.'s and Edward VI.'s time, ancient authors had been made English; and now before 1579, Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Demosthenes, Plutarch, and many Greek and Latin plays, were translated. Among the rest, Phaer's *Virgil*, 1562, Arthur Golding's

Ovid's Metamorphoses, 1567, and George Turbervile's *Historical Epistles of Ovid*, 1567, are, and especially the first, remarkable. The English people in this way were brought into contact, more than before, with the classical spirit, and again it had its awakening power. We cannot say that either the fineness or compactness of classic work appeared in these heterogeneous translations, though one curious result of them was the craze which followed, and which Gabriel Harvey strove, fortunately in vain, to impose on Spenser, for reproducing classical metres in English poetry. Nor were the old English poets neglected. Though Chaucer and Lydgate, Langland, and the rest, were no longer imitated in this time when fresh creation had begun, they were studied, and they added their impulse of life to original poets like Spenser.

(4.) *Theological Reform* stirred men to another kind of literary work. A great number of polemical ballads, pamphlets, and plays issued every year from obscure presses and filled the land. Poets like George Gascoigne and still more Barnaby Googe, represent in their work the hatred the young men had of the old religious system. It was a spirit which did not do much for literature, but it quickened the habit of composition, and made it easier. The Bible also became common property, and its language glided into all theological writing and gave it a literary tone; while the publication of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* or *Book of Martyrs*, 1563, gave to the people all over England a

book which, by its simple style, the ease of its story-telling, and its popular charm made the very peasants who heard it read feel what is meant by literature.

(5.) The *history* of the country and its manners was not neglected. A whole class of antiquarians wrote steadily, if with some dulness, on this subject. Grafton, Stow, Holinshed, and others, at least supplied materials for the study and use of historical dramatists.

(6.) The *love of stories* grew quickly. The old English tales and ballads were eagerly read and collected. Italian tales by various authors were translated and sown so broadcast over London by William Painter in his collection, *The Palace of Pleasure*, 1566, by George Turbervile, in his *Tragical Tales* in verse, and by others, that it is said they were to be bought at every bookstall. The Romances of Spain and Italy poured in, and *Amadis de Gaul*, and the companion romances the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro and the *Ethiopian History*, were sources of books like Sidney's *Arcadia*, and, with the classics, supplied materials for the pageants. A great number of subjects for prose and poetry were thus made ready for literary men, and prose fiction became possible in English literature.

(7.) All over Europe, and especially in Italy, now closely linked to England, the Renaissance had produced a wild spirit of exhausting all the possibilities of human life. Every form, every game of life, was tried, every fancy of goodness or wickedness followed for the fancy's sake. Men said to themselves "Attempt,

Attempt." The act accompanied the thought. England at last shared in this passion, but in English life it was directed. There was a great liberty given to men to live and do as they pleased, provided the queen was worshipped and there was no conspiracy against the State. That much direction did not apply to purely literary production. Its attemptings were unlimited. Anything, everything was tried, especially in the drama.

(8.) The *masques*, *pageants*, *interludes*, and *plays* that were written at this time are scarcely to be counted. At every great ceremonial, whenever the queen made a progress or visited one of the great lords or a university, at the houses of the nobility, and at the Court on all important days, some obscure versifier, or a young scholar at the Inns of Court, at Oxford or at Cambridge, produced a masque or a pageant, or wrote or translated a play. The habit of play-writing became common; a kind of school, one might almost say a manufacture of plays, arose, which partly accounts for the rapid production, the excellence, and the multitude of plays that we find after 1576. Represented all over England, these masques, pageants, and dramas were seen by the people, who were thus accustomed to take an interest, though of an uneducated kind, in the larger drama that was to follow. The literary men on the other hand ransacked, in order to find subjects and scenes for their pageants, ancient and mediæval, magical, and modern literature, and many of them in doing

so became not fine but multifarious scholars. The imagination of England was quickened and educated in this way, and as Biblical stories were well known and largely used, the images of oriental life were kept among the materials of dramatic imagination.

(9.) Another influence bore on literature. It was that given by the *stories of the voyagers*, who, in the new commercial activity of the country, penetrated into remote lands, and saw the strange monsters and savages which the poets now added to the fairies, dwarfs, and giants of the Romances. Before 1579, books had been published on the north-west passage. Frobisher had made his voyages, and Drake had started, to return in 1580, to amaze all England with the story of his sail round the world and of the riches of the Spanish Main. We may trace everywhere in Elizabethan literature the impression made by the wonders told by the sailors and captains who explored and fought from the North Pole to the Southern Seas.

(10.) Then there was the freest possible play of literary criticism. Every wine-shop in London, every room at the university, was filled with the talk of young men on any work which was published and on the manuscripts which were read. Out of this host emerged the men of genius. Moreover, far apart from these, there were in England now, among all the noise and stir, quiet scholars, such as Contarini and Pole had been in Italy, followers of Erasmus and Colet, precursors of Bacon, who kept the lamp of scholarship burning, and who,

when literature became beautiful, nurtured and praised it. Nor were the young nobles, who like Surrey had been in Italy and had known what was good, less useful now. There were many men who, when Shakespeare and Spenser came, were able to say—"This is good," and who drew the new genius into light.

(11.) Lastly, we have proof that there was a large number of persons writing who did not publish their works. It was considered at this time, that to write for the public injured a man, and unless he were driven by poverty he kept his manuscript by him. But things were changed when a great genius like Spenser took the world by storm; when Lyly's *Euphues* enchanted court society; when a fine gentleman like Sir Philip Sidney was known to be a writer. Literature was made the fashion, and the disgrace being taken from it, the production became enormous. Manuscripts written and laid by were at once sent forth; and when the rush began it grew by its own force. Those who had previously been kept from writing by its unpopularity now took it up eagerly, and those who had written before wrote twice as much now. The great improvement also in literary quality is also accounted for by this—that men strove to equal such work as Sidney's or Spenser's, and that a wider and more exacting criticism arose. Nor must one omit to say, that owing to this employment of life on so vast a number of subjects, and to the voyages, and to the new literatures searched into, and to the heat of theological strife, a multitude of new words

streamed into the language, and enriched the vocabulary of imagination. Shakespeare uses 15,000 words.

63. **The Later Literature of Elizabeth's Reign, 1579-1602,** begins with the publication of Lyly's *Euphues*, 1579, and Spenser's *Shepheards Calendar*, also in 1579, and with the writing of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and his *Apology for Poetrie*, 1580–1. It will be best to leave the poem of Spenser aside till we come to write of the poets.

The *Euphues* was the work of JOHN LYLY, poet and dramatist. It is in two parts, *Euphues the Anatomie of Wit*, and *Euphues and his England*. In six years it ran through five editions, so great was its popularity. Its prose style is odd to an excess, "precious" and sweetened, but it has care and charm, and its very faults were of use in softening the solemnity and rudeness of previous prose. The story is long, and is more a loose framework into which Lyly could fit his thoughts on love, friendship, education, and religion, than a true story. It made its mark because it fell in with all the fantastic and changeable life of the time. Its far-fetched conceits, its extravagance of gallantry, its endless metaphors from the classics and especially from natural history, its curious and gorgeous descriptions of dress, and its pale imitation of chivalry, were all reflected in the life and talk and dress of the court of Elizabeth. It became the fashion to talk "Euphuism," and, like the *Utopia* of More, Lyly's book has created an English word.

The *Arcadia* was the work of SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, and

though written about 1580, did not appear till after his death. It is more poetic and more careless in style than the *Euphues*, but it endeavours to get rid of the mere quaintness for quaintness' sake, and of the far-fetched fancies, of Euphuism. It is less the image of the time than of the man. We know that bright and noble figure, the friend of Spenser, the lover of Stella, the last of the old knights, the poet, the critic, and the Christian, who, wounded to the death, gave up the cup of water to a dying soldier. We find his whole spirit in the story of the *Arcadia*, in the first two books and part of the third, which alone were written by him. It is a pastoral romance, after the fashion of the Spanish romances, coloured by his love of his sister, Lady Pembroke, and by the scenery of Wilton under the woods of which he wrote it. The characters are real, but the story is confused by endless digressions. The sentiment is too fine and delicate for the world of action. The descriptions are picturesque; a quaint or poetic thought or an epigram appears in every line. There is no real art in it, nor is it true prose. But it is so full of poetical thought that it became a mine into which poets dug for subjects.

64. **Poetic Criticism** began before the publication of the *Faerie Queene*, and its rise shows the interest now awakened in poetry. The *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586, written by William Webbe "to stirre up some other of meet abilitie to bestow travell on the matter," was followed three years after by the *Art of English Poesie*, attributed to George Puttenham, an elaborate book,

"written," he says, "to help the courtiers and the gentlewomen of the court to write good poetry, that the art may become vulgar for all Englishmen's use," and the phrase marks the interest now taken in poetry by the highest society in England. Sidney himself joined in this critical movement. His *Apology for Poetrie*, the style of which is much more like prose than that of his *Arcadia*, defended against Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* in which poetry and plays were attacked from the Puritan point of view, the nobler uses of poetry. But he, with his contemporary, Gabriel Harvey, was so enthralled by the classical traditions that he also defended the "unities" and attacked all mixture of tragedy and comedy, that is, he supported all that Shakespeare was destined to violate. *The Defence of Rhyme*, written much later by Samuel Daniel, and which finally destroyed the attempt to bring classical metres into our poetry; and also Campion's effort, in his *Observations*, in favour of rhymeless verse, must be mentioned here. Their matter belongs to this time.

65. **Later Prose Literature.** — (1.) *Theological Literature* remained for some years after 1580 only a literature of pamphlets. Puritanism, in its attack on the stage, and in the Martin Marprelate controversy upon episcopal government in the Church, flooded England with small books. Lord Bacon even joined in the latter controversy, and Nash the dramatist made himself famous in the war by the vigour and fierceness of his wit. Periodical writing was, as it were, started on its course. Over

this troubled and multitudinous sea rose at last the stately work of RICHARD HOOKER. It was in 1594 that the first four books of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, a defence of the Church against the Puritans, were given to the world. Before his death he finished the other four. The book has remained ever since a standard work. It is as much moral and political as theological. Its style is grave, clear, and often musical. He adorned it with the figures of poetry, but he used them with temperance, and the grand and rolling rhetoric with which he often concludes an argument is kept for its right place. On the whole, it is the first monument of splendid literary prose that we possess.

(2.) We may place beside it, as other great prose of Elizabeth's later time, the development of *The Essay* in LORD BACON'S *Essays*, 1597, and Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*, published after his death. The highest literary merit of Bacon's Essays is their combination of charm and of poetic prose with conciseness of expression and fulness of thought. But the oratorical and ideal manner in which, with his variety, he sometimes wrote, is best seen in his *New Atlantis*, that imaginary land in the unreachable seas.

(3.) *The Literature of Travel* was carried on by the publication in 1589 of HAKLUYT'S *Navigation, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation.* The influence of a compilation of this kind, containing the great deeds of the English on the seas, has been felt ever since in the literature of fiction and poetry.

(4.) *In the Tales*, which poured out like a flood from the "university wits," from such men as Peele, and Lodge, and Greene, we find the origin of English fiction, and the subjects of many of our plays; while the fantastic desire to revive the practices of chivalry which was expressed in the *Arcadia*, found food in the continuous translation of romances, chiefly of the Charlemagne cycle, but now more from Spain than from France; and in the reading of the Italian poets, Boiardo, Tasso, and Ariosto, who supplied a crowd of our books with the machinery of magic, and with conventional descriptions of nature and of women's beauty.

66. **Edmund Spenser.** — The later Elizabethan poetry begins with the *Shepheards Calendar* of Spenser. Spenser was born in London in 1552, and educated at the Merchant Taylors' Grammar School, which he left for Cambridge in April, 1569. There seems to be evidence that in this year the *Sonnets of Petrarca* and the *Visions of Bellay* afterwards published in 1591, were written by him for a miscellany of verse and prose issued by Van der Noodt, a refugee Flemish physician. At sixteen or seventeen, then, he began literary work. At college Gabriel Harvey, a scholar and critic, and the *Hobbinoll* of Spenser's works, and Edward Kirke, the E. K. of the *Shepheards Calendar*, were his friends. In 1576 he took his degree of M.A., and before he returned to London spent some time in the wilds of Lancashire, where he fell in love with the "Rosalind" of his poetry, a "fair widowe's daughter of the glen." His love was

not returned, a rival interfered, but he clung fast until his marriage to this early passion. His disappointment drove him to the South, and there, 1579, he was made known through Leicester to Leicester's nephew, Philip Sidney. With him, and perhaps at Penshurst, the *Shepheards Calendar* was finished for the press, and the *Faerie Queene* conceived. The publication of the former work, 1579, made Spenser the first poet of the day, and so fresh and musical, and so abundant in new life were its twelve eclogues, that men felt that at last England had given birth to a poet as original, and with as much metrical art as Chaucer. Each month of the year had its own eclogue; some were concerned with his shattered love, two of them were fables, three of them satires on the lazy clergy; one was devoted to fair Eliza's praise: one, the Oak and the Briar, prophesies his mastery over allegory. The others belong to rustic shepherd life. The English of Chaucer is imitated, but the work is full of a new spirit, and as Spenser had begun with translating Petrarca, so here, in two of the eclogues, he imitates Clément Marot. The "Puritanism" of the poem is the same as that of the *Faerie Queene* which he now began to compose. Save in abhorrence of Rome, Spenser does not share in the politics of Puritanism. Nor does he separate himself from the world. He is as much at home in society and with the arts as any literary courtier of the day. He was Puritan in his attack on the sloth and pomp of the clergy; but his moral ideal, built up, as it was, out of Christianity and Platonism, rose far above the narrower ideal of Puritanism.

In the next year, 1580, he went to Ireland with Lord Grey of Wilton as secretary, and afterwards saw and learnt that condition of things which he described in his *View of the Present State of Ireland.* He was made Clerk of Degrees in the Court of Chancery in 1581, and Clerk of the Council of Munster in 1586, and it was then that the manor and castle of Kilcolman were granted to him. Here, at the foot of the Galtees, and bordered to the north by the wild country, the scenery of which is frequently painted in the *Faerie Queene*, and in whose woods and savage places such adventures constantly took place in the service of Elizabeth as are recorded in the *Faerie Queene*, the first three books of that great poem were finished.

67. **The Faerie Queene.** — The plan of the poem is described in Spenser's prefatory letter to Raleigh. The twelve books were to tell the warfare of twelve Knights, in whom twelve virtues were represented. They are sent forth from the court of Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, and their warfare is against the vices and errors, impersonated, which opposed those virtues. In Arthur, the Prince, the Magnificence of the whole of virtue is represented, and he was at last to unite himself in marriage to the Faerie Queene, that divine glory of God to which all human act and thought aspired. Six books of this plan were finished; the legends of Holiness, Temperance, and Chastity, of Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy. The two posthumous cantos on Mutability seem to have been part of a seventh legend, on Constancy, and their splendid

work makes us the more regret that the story of the poem being finished is not true. Alongside of the spiritual allegory is the historical one, in which Elizabeth is Gloriana, and Mary of Scotland Duessa; and Leicester, and at times Sidney, Prince Arthur, and Lord Grey is Arthegall, and Raleigh Timias, and Philip II. the Soldan, or Grantorto. In the midst, other allegories slip in, referring to events of the day, and Elizabeth becomes Belphœbe and Britomart, and Mary is Radegund, and Sidney is Calidore, and Alençon is Braggadochio. At least, these are considered probable attributions. The dreadful "justice" done in Ireland, by the "iron man," and the wars in Belgium, and Norfolk's conspiracy, and the Armada, and the trial of Mary are also shadowed forth.

The allegory is clear in the first two books. Afterwards it is troubled with digressions, sub-allegories, genealogies, with anything that Spenser's fancy led him to introduce. Stories are dropt and never taken up again, and the whole tale is so tangled that it loses the interest of narrative. But it retains the interest of exquisite allegory. It is the poem of the noble powers of the human soul struggling towards union with God, and warring against all the forms of evil; and these powers become real personages, whose lives and battles Spenser tells in verse so musical and so gliding, so delicately wrought, so rich in imaginative ornament, and so inspired with the finer life of beauty, that he has been called the poets' Poet. But he is the poet of all men who love poetry.

Descriptions like those of the House of Pride and the Mask of Cupid, and of the Months, are so vivid in form and colour, that they have always made subjects for artists; while the allegorical personages are, to the very last detail, wrought out by an imagination which describes not only the general character, but the special characteristics of the Virtues or the Vices, of the Months of the year, or of the Rivers of England. In its ideal whole, the poem represents the new love of chivalry, of classical learning; the delight in mystic theories of love and religion, in allegorical schemes, in splendid spectacles and pageants, in wild adventure; the love of England, the hatred of Spain, the strange worship of the queen, even Spenser's own new love. It takes up and uses the popular legends of fairies, dwarfs, and giants, all the recovered romance and machinery of the Italian epics, and mingles them up with the wild scenery of Ireland, with the savages and wonders of the New World. Almost the whole spirit of the Renaissance under Elizabeth, except its coarser and baser elements, is in its pages. Of anything impure, or ugly, or violent, there is no trace. And Spenser adds to all his own sacred love of love, his own pre-eminent sense of the loveliness of loveliness, walking through the whole of this woven world of faerie —

"With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace."

The first three books were finished in Ireland, and Raleigh listened to them in 1589 at Kilcolman Castle,

among the alder shades of the river Mulla that fed the lake below the castle. Delighted with the poem, he brought Spenser to England, and the queen, the court, and the whole of England soon shared in Raleigh's delight. It was the first great ideal poem that England had produced; it places him side by side with Milton, but on a throne built of wholly different material. It has never ceased to make poets, and it will live, as he said in his dedication to the queen, "with the eternitie of her fame."

68. **Spenser's Minor Poems.**—The next year, 1591, Spenser, being still in England, collected his smaller poems, most of which seem to be early work, and published them. Among them *Mother Hubberd's Tale* is a remarkable satire, somewhat in the manner of Chaucer, on society, on the evils of a beggar soldiery, of the Church, of the court, and of misgovernment. The *Ruins of Time*, and still more the *Tears of the Muses*, support the statement that literature was looked on coldly previous to 1580. Sidney had died in 1586, and three of these poems bemoan his death. The others are of slight importance, and the whole collection was entitled *Complaints*. His *Daphnaida* seems to have also appeared in 1591. Returning to Ireland, he gave an account of his visit and of the court of Elizabeth in *Colin Clout's come Home again*, and at last, after more than a year's pursuit, won, in 1594, his second love for his wife, and found with her perfect happiness. A long series of lovely "Sonnets"—the *Amoretti*, records the progress of his wooing; and

the *Epithalamion*, his exultant marriage hymn, is the most glorious love-song in the English tongue. These three were published in 1595. At the close of 1595 he brought to England in a second visit the last three books of the *Faerie Queene*. The next year he spent in London, and published these books, as well as the *Prothalamion* on the marriage of Lord Worcester's daughters, the *Hymns on Love and Beauty* and *on Heavenly Love and Beauty*. The two first hymns were rapturously written in his youth; the two others, now written, and with even greater rapture, enshrine that love philosophy of Petrarca which makes earthly love a ladder to the love of God. The close of his life was sorrowful. In 1598, Tyrone's rebellion drove him out of Ireland. Kilcolman was sacked and burnt, one of his children perished in the flames, and Spenser and his family fled for their lives to England. Broken-hearted, poor, but not forgotten, the poet died in a London tavern. All his fellows went with his body to the grave, where, close by Chaucer, he lies in Westminster Abbey. London, "his most kindly nurse," takes care also of his dust, and England keeps him in her love.

69. **Later Elizabethan Poetry: Translations.** — There are three translators that take literary rank among the crowd that carried on the work of the earlier time. Two mark the influence of Italy, one the more powerful influence of the Greek spirit. SIR JOHN HARINGTON in 1591 translated Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, FAIRFAX in 1600 translated Tasso's *Jerusalem*, and his book is "one of the

glories of Elizabeth's reign." But the noblest translation is that of Homer's whole work by GEORGE CHAPMAN, the dramatist, the first part of which appeared in 1598. The vivid life and energy of the time, its creative power and its force, are expressed in this poem, which is "more an Elizabethan tale written about Achilles and Ulysses" than a translation. The rushing gallop of the long fourteen-syllable stanza in which it is written has the fire and swiftness of Homer, but it has not his directness or dignity. Its "inconquerable quaintness" and diffuseness are wholly unlike the pure form and light and measure of Greek work. But it is a distinct poem of such power that it will excite and delight all lovers of poetry, as it excited and delighted Keats. John Florio's *Translation of the Essays of Montaigne*, 1603, and North's *Plutarch*, are also, though in prose, to be mentioned here, because Shakespeare used the books, and because we must mark Montaigne's influence on English literature even before his retranslation by Charles Cotton.

70. **The Four Phases of Poetry after 1579.** — Spenser reflected in his poems the romantic spirit of the English Renaissance. The other poetry of Elizabeth's reign reflected the whole of English Life. The best way to arrange it — omitting as yet the Drama — is in an order parallel to the growth of the national life, and the proof that it is the best way is, that on the whole such an historical order is a true chronological order. *First*, then, if we compare England after 1580, as writers have often done, to an ardent youth, we shall find in the poetry of

the first years that followed that date all the elements of youth. It is a poetry of love, and romance, and imagination, — of Romeo and Juliet. *Secondly*, and later on, when Englishmen grew older in feeling, their enthusiasm, which had flitted here and there in action and literature over all kinds of subjects, settled down into a steady enthusiasm for England itself. The country entered on its early manhood, and parallel with this there is the great outbreak of historical plays, and a set of poets whom I will call the Patriotic Poets. *Thirdly*, and later still, the fire and strength of the people, becoming inward, resulted in a graver and more thoughtful national life, and parallel with this are the tragedies of Shakespeare and the poets who have been called philosophical. These three classes of poets overlapped one another, and grew up gradually, but on the whole their succession is the image of a real succession of national thought and emotion.

A *fourth* and separate phase does not represent, as these do, a new national life, a new religion, and new politics, but the despairing struggle of the old faith against the new. There were numbers of men, such as Wordsworth has finely sketched in old Norman in the *Doe of Rylstone*, who vainly and sorrowfully strove against all the new national elements. ROBERT SOUTHWELL, of Norfolk, a Jesuit priest, was the poet of Roman Catholic England. Imprisoned for three years, racked ten times, and finally executed, he wrote, while confessor to Lady Arundel, a number of poems published at various intervals, and

finally collected under the title, *St. Peter's Complaint, Mary Magdalen's Tears, with other works of the Author, R.S.* The *Mœoniæ*, and a short prose work *Marie Magdalen's Funerall Tears*, became also very popular. It marks not only the large Roman Catholic element in the country, but also the strange contrasts of the time that eleven editions of books with these titles were published between 1595 and 1609, at a time when, the *Venus and Adonis* of Shakespeare led the way for a multitude of poems — following on Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and Lodge's *Glaucus and Scylla* — which sang devotedly of love and amorous joy.

71. **The Love Poetry.** — I have called it by this name because all its best work is almost limited to that subject — the subject of youth. The Love sonnets, written in a series, are a feature of the time. The best are Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Daniel's *Delia*, Constable's *Diana*, Drayton's *Idea*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. More than twelve collections of these love sonnets, each dedicated to one lady, and often a hundred in number, were published between 1593 and 1596, and these had been preceded by many others.

The Miscellanies, to which I have already alluded, and the best of which were *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *England's Helicon*, and *Davison's Rhapsody*, were scarcely less numerous than the Song-books published with music, full of delightful lyrics. The wonder is that the lyrical level in such a multitude of short poems is so high throughout. Some songs reach a first-rate ex-

cellence, but even the least good have the surprising spirit of poetry in them. The best of them are "old and plain, and dallying with the innocence of love," childlike in their natural sweetness and freshness, but full also of a southern ardour of passion. Shakespeare's excel the others in their gay rejoicing, their firm reality, their exquisite ease, and when in the plays, gain a new beauty from their fitness to their dramatic place. Others possess a quaint pastoralism like shepherd life in porcelain, such as Marlowe's well-known song, "Come live with me, and be my love;" others a splendour of love and beauty as in Lodge's *Song of Rosaline*, and Spenser's on his marriage. To specialise the various kinds would be too long, for there never was in our land a richer outburst of lyrical ravishment and fancy. England was like a grove in spring, full of birds in revel and solace. Love poems of a longer kind were also made, such as Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, the *Venus and Adonis* and, if we may date them here, the *Elegies* of John Donne. I mention only a few of these poems, the mark of which is a luscious sensuousness. There were also religious poems, the reflection of the Puritan and Church elements in English society. They were collected under such titles as the *Handful of Honeysuckles*, the *Poor Widow's Mite*, *Psalms and Sonnets*, and there are some good things among them written by William Hunnis.

72. **The Patriotic Poets.** — Among all this poetry of Romance, Religion, and Love, rose a poetry which

devoted itself to the glory of England. It was chiefly historical, and as it may be said to have had its germ in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, so it had its perfect flower in the historical dramas of Shakespeare. Men had now begun to have a great pride in England. She had stepped into the foremost rank, had outwitted France, subdued internal foes, beaten and humbled Spain on every sea. Hence the history of the land became precious, and the very rivers, hills, and plains honourable, and to be sung and praised in verse. This poetic impulse is best represented in the works of three men — WILLIAM WARNER, SAMUEL DANIEL, and MICHAEL DRAYTON. Born within a few years of each other, about 1560, they all lived beyond the century, and the national poetry they set on foot lasted when the romantic poetry lost its wealth and splendour.

William Warner's great book was *Albion's England*, 1586, a history of England in fourteen-syllable verse from the Deluge to Queen Elizabeth. It is clever, humorous, now grave, now gay, crowded with stories, and runs to 10,000 lines. Its popularity was great, and the English in which it was written deserved it. Such stories in it as *Argentile and Curan*, and the *Patient Countess*, prove Warner to have had a true, pathetic vein of poetry. His English is not however so good as that of "well-languaged Daniel," who, among tragedies and pastoral comedies, the noble series of sonnets to Delia and poems of pure fancy, wrote *The Complaint of Rosamond*, far more poetical than his

steadier, even prosaic *Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*. Spenser saw in him a new "shepherd of poetry who did far surpass the rest," and Coleridge says that the style of his *Hymen's Triumph* may be declared "imperishable English." Of the three the easiest poet was Drayton. *The Barons' Wars*, *England's Heroical Epistles*, 1597, *The Miseries of Queen Margaret*, and *Four Legends*, together with the brilliant *Ballad of Agincourt* prove his patriotic fervour. Not content with these, he set himself to glorify the whole of his land in the *Polyolbion*, thirty books, and nearly 100,000 lines. It is a description in Alexandrines of the "tracts, mountains, forests, and other parts of this renowned isle of Britain, with intermixture of the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, pleasures, and commodities of the same, digested into a poem." It was not a success, though it deserved success. Its great length was against it, but the real reason was that this kind of poetry had had its day. It appeared in 1613, in James I.'s reign. He, as well as Daniel, did other work. Indeed Drayton is a striking instance of the way in which these divisions, which I have made for the sake of a general order, overlapped one another. He is as much the love poet as the patriotic poet in his eclogues of 1593 and in his later *Idea;* he is also a religious, a satirical, a lyrical, and a fairy poet. He plays on every kind of harp.

73. **Philosophical Poets.** — Before the date of the *Polyolbion* a change had come. As the patriotic poets

on the whole came after the romantic, so the patriotic, on the whole, were followed by the philosophical poets. The land was settled; enterprise ceased to be the first thing; men sat down to think, and in poetry questions of religious and political philosophy were treated with "sententious reasoning, grave, subtle, and condensed." Shakespeare, in his passage from comedy to tragedy, in 1601, illustrates this change. The two poets who best represent it are SIR JNO. DAVIES and FULKE GREVILLE, Lord Brooke. In Davies himself we find an instance of it. His earlier poem of the *Orchestra*, 1596, in which the whole world is explained as a dance, is as exultant as Spenser. His later poem, 1599, is compact and vigorous reasoning, for the most part without fancy. Its very title, *Nosce te ipsum* — Know Thyself — and its divisions, 1. "On humane learning," 2. "The immortality of the soul" — mark the alteration. Two little poems, one of Bacon's, on the *Life of Man*, as a bubble, and one of Sir Henry Wotton's, on the *Character of a Happy Life*, are instances of the same change. It is still more marked in Lord Brooke's long, obscure poems *On Human Learning, on Wars, on Monarchy, and on Religion*. They are political and historical treatises, not poems, and all in them, said Lamb, "is made frozen and rigid by intellect." Apart from poetry, "they are worth notice as an indication of that thinking spirit on political science which was to produce the riper speculations of Hobbes, Harrington, and Locke." Brooke too, in a happier mood, was a lyrist; and his

collection, *Cælica*, has some of the graces of love and its imagination.

74. **Satirical Poetry,** which lives best when imaginative creation begins to decay, arose also towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. It had been touched in the beginning before Spenser by Gascoigne's *Steele Glas*, but had no further growth save in prose until 1593, when John Donne is supposed to have written some of his *Satires*. Thomas Lodge, Joseph Hall, John Marston, wrote satirical poems in the last part of the sixteenth century. These satires are all written in a rugged, broken style, supposed to be the proper style for satire. Donne's are the best, and are so because he was a true poet. Though his work was mostly done in the reign of James I., and though his poetical reputation, and his influence (which was very great) did not reach their height till after the publication in 1633 of all his poems, he really belongs, by dint of his youthful sensuousness, of his imaginative flame, and of his sad and powerful thought, to the Elizabethans. So also does William Drummond, of Hawthornden, whose work was done in the reign of James I., and whose name is linked by poetry and friendship to Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. Both are the result of the Elizabethan influence extending to Scotland. Drummond's sonnets and madrigals have some of the grace of Sidney, and he rose at intervals into grave and noble verse, as in his sonnet on John the Baptist. We turn now to the drama, which in this age grew into magnificence.

THE DRAMA

75. **Early Dramatic Representation in England.** — The English Drama grew up through the Mystery and the Miracle play, the Morality and the Interlude, the rude farce of the strolling players and the pageant. The *Mystery* was the representation (at first in or near the Church, and by the clergy; and then in the towns, and by the laity) of the events of the Old and New Testaments which bore on the Fall and the Redemption of Man. The *Miracle play*, though distinct elsewhere from the Mystery, was the common name of both in England, and was the representation of some legendary story of a saint or martyr. These stories gave more freedom of speech, a more worldly note, and a greater range of characters to the mystery plays. They also supplied a larger opportunity for the comic element. The Miracle plays of England fell before long into two classes, represented at the feasts of Christmas Day and Easter Day; and about 1262 the town-guilds took them into their hands. At Christmas the Birth of Christ was represented, and the events which made it necessary, back to the Fall of Man. At Easter the Passion was represented in every detail up to the Ascension, and the play often began with the raising of Lazarus. Sometimes even the Baptism was brought in, and finally, the Last Judgment was added to the double series, which thus embraced the whole history of man from the creation to the close. About the beginning of the fourteenth century

these two series were brought together into one, and acted on Corpus Christi Day on a great moveable stage in the open spaces of the towns. The whole series consisted of a number of short plays written frequently by different authors, and each guild took the play which suited it best. In a short time, there was scarcely a town of any importance in England from Newcastle to Exeter which had not its Corpus Christi play, and the representations lasted from one day to eight days. Of these sets of plays we possess the Towneley plays, 32 in all, those of York, 48 in all, those of Chester, 24 in all, and a casual collection, called of Coventry, of later and unconnected plays. Of course, these sets only represent a small portion of the Miracle plays of England. It is not improbable that every little town had its own maker of them. Any play that pleased was carried from the town to the castle, from the castle, it may be, to the court. The castle chaplain sometimes composed them: the king kept players of them and scenery for them. On the whole this irregular drama lasted, if we take in its Anglo-Norman beginnings in French and Latin, for nearly 500 years, from 1110, when we first hear at St. Albans of the Miracle play of St. Catherine, to the reign of Henry III., when *The Harrowing of Hell*, our first extant religious drama in English, was acted, and then to 1580, when we last hear of the representation of a Miracle play at Coventry.

76. Separate plays preceded and existed alongside of these large series. Not only on the days of Christ-

mas, Easter, and Corpus Christi were plays acted, but plays were made for separate feasts, saints' days, and the turns of the year, and these had the character of the counties where they were made. The villages took them up, and soon began to ask for secular as well as religious representations at their fairs and merry-makings. The strolling players answered the demand, and secular subjects began to be treated with romantic or comic aims, and with some closeness to natural life. We have a play about Robin Hood of the sixteenth century, acted on May Day; the *Play of St. George;* the *Play of the Wake* on St. John's Eve. Some of the farcical parts of the Miracle plays, isolated from the rest, were acted, and we have a dramatic fragment taken from the very secular romance of *Dame Siriz,* which dates from the time of Edward I. We may be sure it was not the only one.

77. **The Morality** begins as we come to the reign of Edward III. We hear of the *Play of the Paternoster,* and of one of its series, the *Play of Laziness.* But the oldest extant are of the time of Henry VI. *The Castle of Constancy; Humanity; Spirit, Will, and Understanding*—these titles partly explain what the *Morality* was. It was a play in which the characters were the Vices and Virtues, with the addition afterwards of allegorical personages, such as Riches, Good Deeds, Confession, Death, and any human condition or quality needed for the play. These characters were brought together in a rough story, at the end of which

Virtue triumphed, or some moral principle was established. The later dramatic *fool* grew up in the Moralities out of a personage called "The Vice," and the humorous element was introduced by the retaining of "The Devil" from the Miracle play and by making *The Vice* torment him. We draw nearer then in the Morality to the regular drama. Its story had to be invented, a proper plot had to be conceived, a clear end fixed upon, to produce which the allegorical characters acted on one another. We are on the very verge of the natural drama; and so close was the relation that the acting of Moralities did not die out till about the end of Elizabeth's reign. A certain transition to the regular drama may be observed in them when historical characters, celebrated for a virtue or vice, were introduced instead of the virtue or the vice, as when Aristides took the place of Justice. Moreover, as the heat of the struggle of the Reformation increased, the Morality was used to support a side. Real men and women were shown under the thin cloaks of its allegorical characters. The stage was becoming a living power when this began.

78. **The Interludes** must next be noticed. There had been interludes in the Miracle plays, short, humorous pieces, interpolated for the amusement of the people. These were continued in the Moralities, and were made closer still to popular life. It occurred to JOHN HEYWOOD to identify himself with this form of drama, and to raise the Interludes into a place in literature. In his

hands, from 1520 to 1540, the Interlude became a kind of farce, and he wrote several for the amusement of the court of Henry VIII. He drew the characters from real life; in many cases he gave them the names of men and women, but he retained "the Vice" as a personage.

79. **The Regular Drama: its First Stage.** — These were the beginnings of the English Drama. To trace the many and various windings of the way from the Interludes of Heywood to the regular drama of Elizabeth were too long and too involved a work for this book. We need only say that the first pure English comedy was *Ralph Roister Doister*, written by NICHOLAS UDALL, master of Eton, known to have been acted before 1551, but not published till 1566. It is our earliest picture of London manners; it is divided into regular acts and scenes, and is made in rhyme. The first English tragedy is *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, written by Sackville and Norton, and represented in 1561. The story was taken from British legend; the method followed that of Seneca. A few tragedies on the same classical model followed, but before long this classical type of plays died out.

For twenty years or so, from 1560 to 1580, the drama was learning its way by experiments. Moralities were still made, comedies, tragi-comedies, farces, tragedies; and sometimes tragedy, farce, comedy, and morality were rolled into one play. The verse of the drama was as unsettled as its form. The plays were written in doggerel, in the fourteen-syllable line, in prose, and in a ten-syllable verse, and these were sometimes mixed in the

same play. They were acted chiefly at the Universities, the Inns of Court, the Court, and after 1576 by players in the theatres. Out of this confusion arose 1580–8 (1) two sets of dramatic writers, the "University Wits" and the theatrical playwrights; (2) a distinct dramatic verse, the blank verse destined to be used by Marlowe, Peele, and Greene; and (3) the licensed theatre.

80. **The Theatre.** — A patent was given in 1574 to the Earl of Leicester's servants to act plays in any town in England, and they built in 1576 the Blackfriars Theatre. In the same year two others were set up in the fields about Shoreditch — "The Theatre" and "The Curtain." The Globe Theatre, built for Shakespeare and his fellows in 1599, may stand as a type of the rest. In the form of a hexagon outside, it was circular within, and open to the weather, except above the stage. The play began at three o'clock; the nobles and ladies sat in boxes or in stools on the stage, the people stood in the pit or yard. The stage itself, strewn with rushes, was a naked room, with a blanket for a curtain. Wooden imitations of animals, towers, woods, houses, were all the scenery used, and a board, stating the place of action, was hung out from the top when the scene changed. Boys acted the female parts. It was only after the Restoration that movable scenery and actresses were introduced. No "pencil's aid" supplied the landscape of Shakespeare's plays. The forest of Arden, the castle of Macbeth, were "seen only by the intellectual eye."

81. **The Second Stage of the Drama** ranges from

1580 to 1596. It includes the plays of Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Marlowe, Kyd, Nash, and the earliest works of Shakespeare. During this time we know that more than 100 different plays were performed by four out of the eleven companies; so swift and plentiful was their production. They were written in prose, and in rhyme, and in blank verse mixed with prose and rhyme. Prose and rhyme prevailed before 1587, when Marlowe in his play of *Tamburlaine* made blank verse so new and splendid a thing that it overcame all other dramatic vehicles. JOHN LYLY, however, wrote so much of his eight plays in prose, that he established, we may say, the use of prose in the drama—an innovation which Gascoigne introduced, and which Shakespeare carried to perfection. Some beautiful little songs scattered through Lyly's plays are the forerunners of the songs with which Shakespeare and his fellows illumined their dramas, and the witty "quips and cranks," repartees and similes of Lyly's fantastic prose dialogue were the school of Shakespeare's first prose dialogue. PEELE, GREENE, and MARLOWE, the three important names of the period, belong to the University men. So do Lodge and Nash, and perhaps Kyd. They are the first in whose hands the play of human passion and action is expressed with any true dramatic effect. GEORGE PEELE'S *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, and his *David and Bethsabe* are full of passages of new and delightful poetry, and when the poetry is good, his blank verse and his heroic couplet are smooth and tender. ROBERT

GREENE, of whose prose in pamphlet and tale much might be said, spent ten years in writing, and died in 1592. There is little poetry in his plays, but he could write a charming song. KYD's best play is the *Spanish Tragedy*. None of these men had the power of working out a play by the development of their "characters" to a natural conclusion. They anticipate the poetry, but not the art, of Shakespeare. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE as dramatist surpassed, as poet rose far above, them, and as metrist is almost as great as Shakespeare. The difference between the unequal action and thought of his *Doctor Faustus*, and the quiet and orderly progression to its end of the play of *Edward II.*, is all the more remarkable when we know that he died at thirty. As he may be said to have made the verse of the drama, so he created the English tragic drama. His best plays are wrought with a new skill to their end, his characters are outlined with strength and developed with fire. Each play illustrates one ruling passion, in its growth, its power, and its extremes. *Tamburlaine* paints the desire of universal empire; the *Jew of Malta*, the married passions of greed and hatred; *Doctor Faustus*, the struggle and failure of man to possess all knowledge and all pleasure without toil and without law; *Edward II.*, the misery of weakness and the agony of a king's ruin. His knowledge of human nature was neither extensive nor penetrative, but the splendour of his imagination, and the noble surging of his verse, make us forget his want of depth and of variety. Every one has dwelt on his

intemperance in phrases and of images, but the spirit of poetry moves in them; we even enjoy the natural faults of fiery youth in a fiery time. He had no humour, and his farcical fun is like the boisterous play of a clumsy animal. In nothing is the difference between Shakespeare and him and his fellows more infinite than in this point of humour. And indeed he had little pathos. His sorrows are too loud. Nevertheless, by force of poetry, not of dramatic art, Marlowe made a noble porch to the temple which Shakespeare built. That temple, however, in spite of all the preceding work, seems to spring out of nothing, so astonishing it is in art, in beauty, in conception. He himself was his only worthy predecessor, and *the third stage of the drama* includes his work, that of Ben Jonson's, and of a few others. It is the work, moreover, not of University men who did not know the stage, but of men who were not only men of genius, but also playwrights who understood what a play should be, and how it was to be staged.

82. **William Shakespeare** in twenty-eight years made the drama represent almost the whole of human life. He was baptised April 26, 1564, and was the son of a comfortable burgess of Stratford-on-Avon. While he was still young his father fell into poverty, and an interrupted education left him an inferior scholar. "He had small Latin and less Greek;" but he had a vast store of English.[1]

[1] He uses 15,000 words, and he wrote pure English. Out of every five verbs, adverbs, and nouns (*e.g.* in the last act of *Othello*), four are Teutonic; and he is more Teutonic in comedy than in tragedy.

However, by dint of genius and by living in a society in which every kind of information was attainable, he became an accomplished man. The story told of his deer-stealing in Charlecote woods is without proof, but it is likely that his youth was wild and passionate. At nineteen he married Anne Hathaway, more than seven years older than himself, and was probably unhappy with her. For this reason, or from poverty, or from the driving of the genius that led him to the stage, he left Stratford about 1586–7, and came to London at the age of twenty-two years, and falling in with Marlowe, Greene, and the rest, became an actor and playwright, and may have lived their unrestrained and riotous life for some years. It is convenient to divide his work into periods, and to state the order in which it is now supposed his plays were written. But we must not imagine that the periods and the order are really settled. We know something, but not all we ought to know, of this matter.

83. **His First Period.** — It is probable that before leaving Stratford he had sketched a part at least of his *Venus and Adonis*. It is full of the country sights and sounds, of the ways of birds and animals, such as he saw when wandering in Charlecote woods. Its rich and overladen poetry and its warm colouring made him, when it was published, 1593, at once the favourite of men like Lord Southampton, and lifted him into fame. But before that date he had done work for the stage by touching up old plays, and writing new ones. We seem to trace his "prentice hand" in some dramas of the time, but the

first he is usually thought to have fully retouched is *Titus Andronicus*, and some time after the *First Part of Henry VI.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, supposed to be written 1589 or 1590, the first of his original plays, in which he quizzed and excelled the Euphuists in wit, was followed by the involved and rapid farce of the *Comedy of Errors*. Out of these frolics of intellect and action he passed into pure poetry in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and mingled into fantastic beauty the classic legend, the mediæval fairyland, and the clownish life of the English mechanic. Italian story laid its charm upon him about the same time, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* preceded the southern glow of passion in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he first reached tragic power. They are said to complete, with *Love's Labour's Won*, afterwards recast as *All's Well that Ends Well*, the love plays of his early period. We should read along with them, as belonging to the same period, the *Rape of Lucrece*, a poem finally printed in 1594, one year later than the *Venus and Adonis*, which was probably finished, if not wholly written, at this passionate time.

The same poetic succession we have traced in the poets, is now found in Shakespeare. The patriotic feeling of England, also represented in Marlowe and Peele, had seized on him, and he began his great series of historical plays with *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* To introduce Richard III. or to complete the subject, he recast the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.*, and ended what we have called his first period by *King John* about 1596.

84. **His Second Period, 1596-1601.** — In the *Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare reached entire mastery over his art. A mingled woof of tragic and comic threads is brought to its highest point of colour when Portia and Shylock meet in court. Pure comedy followed in his retouch of the old *Taming of the Shrew*, and all the wit of the world mixed with noble history met in the first and second *Henry IV.*, 1597–8; while Falstaff was continued in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The historical plays were then closed with *Henry V.*, 1599; a splendid dramatic song to the glory of England. The Globe Theatre of which he was one of the proprietors, was built in 1599. In the comedies he wrote for it, Shakespeare turned to write of love again, not to touch its deeper passion as before, but to play with it in all its lighter phases. The flashing dialogue of *Much Ado About Nothing* was followed by the far-off forest world of *As You Like It*, 1599, where "the time fleets carelessly," and Rosalind's character is the play. Amid all its gracious lightness steals in a new element, and the melancholy of Jaques is the first touch we have of the older Shakespeare who had "gained his experience, and whose experience had made him sad." As yet it was but a touch; *Twelfth Night* shows no trace of it, though the play that followed, *All's Well that Ends Well*, 1601? again strikes a sadder note. We find this sadness fully grown in the later *Sonnets*, which are said to have been finished about 1602. We know that some of the *Sonnets* existed in 1598, but they were all printed together for the first time in 1609. They

form together the most deep, ardent, subtle, and varied representation of love in our language, and their emotion is mingled with so great a wealth of simple and complex thought that they seem to be written out of the experience, not of one but of many men.

Shakespeare's life changed now, and his mind changed with it. He had grown wealthy during this period, famous, and loved by society. He was the friend of the Earls of Southampton and Essex, and of William Herbert, Lord Pembroke. The queen patronised him; all the best literary society was his own. He had rescued his father from poverty, bought the best house in Stratford and much land, and was a man of wealth and comfort. Suddenly all his life seems to have grown dark. His best friends fell into ruin, Essex perished on the scaffold, Southampton went to the Tower, Pembroke was banished from the court; he may himself, some have thought, have been slightly involved in the rising of Essex. Added to this, we may conjecture, from the imaginative pageantry of the sonnets, that he had unwisely loved, and been betrayed in his love by a dear friend. Public and private ill then weighed heavily upon him; he seems to even have had disgust for his profession as an actor; and in darkness of spirit, though still clinging to the business of the theatre, he passed from comedy to write of the sterner side of the world, to tell the tragedy of mankind.

85. **His Third Period, 1601–1608,** begins with the last days of Queen Elizabeth. It opens with *Julius*

Cæsar, and we may have, scattered through the telling of the great Roman's fate, the expression of Shakespeare's sorrow for the ruin of Essex. *Hamlet* followed, 1601–3? for the poet felt, like the Prince of Denmark, that "the time was out of joint." *Hamlet*, the dreamer, may well represent Shakespeare as he stood aside from the crash that overwhelmed his friends, and thought on the changing world. The tragi-comedy of *Measure for Measure*, 1603? may have now been written, and is tragic in thought throughout. *Othello*, 1604, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, 1608? *Timon* (only in part his own), were all written in these five years. The darker sins of men; the unpitying fate which slowly gathers round and falls on mistakes and crimes, on ambition, luxury, and pride; the avenging wrath of conscience; the cruelty and punishment of weakness; the treachery, lust, jealousy, ingratitude, madness of men; the follies of the great and the fickleness of the mob, are all, with a thousand other varying moods and passions, painted, and felt as his own while he painted them, during this stern time.

86. **His Fourth Period, 1608–1613.** — As Shakespeare wrote of these things he passed out of them, and his last days are full of the gentle and loving calm of one who has known sin and sorrow and fate, but has risen above them into peaceful victory. Like his great contemporary Bacon, he left the world and his own evil time behind him, and with the same quiet dignity sought the innocence and stillness of country life. The country breathes

through all the dramas of this time. The flowers Perdita gathers in *Winter's Tale*, the frolic of the sheep-shearing, he may have seen in the Stratford meadows; the song of Fidele in *Cymbeline* is written by one who already feared no more the frown of the great, nor slander, nor censure rash, and was looking forward to the time when men should say of him —

> Quiet consummation have;
> And renownèd be thy grave!

Shakespeare probably left London in 1609, and lived in the house he had bought at Stratford-on-Avon. He was reconciled, it is said, to his wife, and the plays now written dwell on domestic peace and forgiveness. The story of *Marina*, which he left unfinished, and which it is supposed two later writers expanded into the play of *Pericles*, is the first of his closing series of dramas. *Cymbeline*, 1609? *The Tempest*, 1610? *Winter's Tale*, bring his history up to 1611, and in the next year he may have closed his poetic life by writing, with Fletcher, *Henry VIII.*, 1612? The *Two Noble Kinsmen* of Fletcher, part of which is attributed to Shakespeare, and in which the poet sought the inspiration of Chaucer, would belong to this period. For some three years he kept silence, and then, on the 23d of April, 1616, it is supposed on his fifty-second birthday, he died.

87. **His Work.** — We can only guess with regard to Shakespeare's life and character. It has been tried to find out what he was from his sonnets, and from his plays,

but every attempt seems to be a failure. We cannot lay our hand on anything and say for certain that it was spoken by Shakespeare out of his own personality. He created men and women whose dramatic action on each other, and towards a chosen end, was intended to please the public, not to reveal himself. Frequently failing in fineness of workmanship, having, but far less than the other dramatists, the faults of the art of his time, he was yet in all other points—in creative power, in impassioned conception and execution, in truth to universal human nature, in intellectual power, in intensity of feeling, in the great matter and manner of his poetry, in the welding together of thought, passion, and action, in range, in plenteousness, in the continuance of his romantic feeling —the greatest poet our modern world has known. Like the rest of the greater poets, he reflected the noble things of his time, but refused to reflect the base. Fully influenced, as we see in Hamlet he was, by the graver and more philosophic cast of thought of the latter time of Elizabeth; passing on into the reign of James I., when pedantry took the place of gaiety, and sensual the place of imaginative love in the drama, and artificial art the place of that art which itself is nature; he preserves to the last the natural passion, the simple tenderness, the sweetness, grace, and fire of the youthful Elizabethan poetry. The *Winter's Tale* is as lovely a love-story as *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Tempest* is more instinct with imagination and as great in fancy as the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and yet there are fully twenty years between

them. The only change is in the increase of power and in a closer, graver, and more ideal grasp of human nature. In the unchangeableness of this joyful and creative art-power Shakespeare is almost alone. It is true that in these last plays his art is more self-conscious, less natural, and the greater glory is therefore lost, but the power is not less nor the beauty.

88. **The Decline of the Drama** begins while Shakespeare is alive. At first we can scarcely call it decline, it was so superb in its own qualities. For it began with "rare BEN JONSON." With him are connected by associated work, by quarrels, and by date, Dekker, Marston, and Chapman. They belong with Shakespeare to the days of Elizabeth and the days of James I. Ben Jonson's first play, in its very title, *Every Man in his Humour*, 1596, enables us to say in what the first step of this decline consisted. The drama in Shakespeare's hands had been the painting of the whole of human nature, the painting of characters as they were built up by their natural bent, and by the play of circumstance upon them. The drama, in Ben Jonson's hands, was the painting of particular phases of human nature, especially of his own age; and his characters are men and women as they may become when they are completely mastered by a special bias of the mind or *Humour*. "The Manners, now called Humours, feed the stage," says Jonson himself. *Every Man in his Humour* was followed by *Every Man out of his Humour*, and by *Cynthia's Revels*, written to satirise the courtiers. The

fierce satire of these plays brought the town down upon him, and he replied to their "noise" in the *Poetaster*, in which Dekker and Marston were satirised. Dekker answered with the *Satiro-Mastix*, a bitter parody on the *Poetaster*, in which he did not spare Jonson's bodily defects. Silent then for two years, he reappeared with the tragedy of *Sejanus*, and then quickly produced three splendid comedies in James I.'s reign, *Volpone the Fox*, the *Silent Woman*, and the *Alchemist*, 1605–9–10. The first is the finest thing he ever did, as great in power as it is in the interest and skill of its plot; the second is chiefly valuable as a picture of English life in high society; the third is full of Jonson's obscure learning, but its character of Sir Epicure Mammon is done with Jonson's keenest power. In 1611 his *Catiline* appeared, and then *Bartholomew Fair*. Eight years after he was made Poet Laureate. Soon he became poor and palsy-stricken, but his genius did not decay. His tender and imaginative pastoral drama, the *Sad Shepherd*, proves that, like Shakespeare, Jonson grew gentler as he grew near to death, and death took him in 1637. He was a great man. The power and copiousness of the young Elizabethan age belonged to him; and he stands far below, for he had no passion, but still worthily by, Shakespeare, "a robust, surly, and observing dramatist." THOS. DEKKER, whose lovely lyrics are well known, and whose copious prose occupies five volumes, "had poetry enough," Lamb said, "for anything." His light comedies of manners are excellent

pictures of the time. But his romantic poetry is better felt in such dramas as *Patient Grissil*, *Old Fortunatus*, and *The Witch of Edmonton*, in which, though others worked them along with Dekker, the women are all his own by tenderness, grace, subtlety, and pathos. JOHN MARSTON, whose chief plays were written between 1602 and 1605, needs little notice here. He is best known by certain noble and beautiful passages, and his finest plays were *Antonio and Mellida* and the *Malcontent*. Of the three GEO. CHAPMAN was the most various genius, and the most powerful. He illuminated the age of Elizabeth by the first part of his translation of Homer; he lived on into the reign of Charles I. His poems (of which the best are his continuation of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, and *The Tears of Peace*) are extreme examples of the gnarled, sensuous, formless, and obscure poetry of which Dryden cured our literature. His plays are of a finer quality, especially the five tragedies taken from French history. They are weighty with thought, but the thought devours their action, and they are difficult and sensational. Inequality pervades them. His mingling of intellectual violence with intellectual imagination, of obscurity with a noble exultation and clearness of poetry, is a strange compound of the earlier and later Elizabethans. He, like Marlowe, but with less of beauty, "hurled instructive fire about the world." With these three I may mention Cyril Tourneur and John Day, the one as ferocious in the *Atheist's Tragedy* as the other was graceful in his *Parliament of Bees*.

Both were poets, and both were more truly Elizabethan than Beaumont, Fletcher, or Webster.

89. **Masques.** — Rugged as Jonson was, he could turn to light and graceful work, and it is with his name that we connect the *Masques*. He wrote them delightfully. Masques were dramatic representations made for a festive occasion, with a reference to the persons present and the occasion. Their personages were allegorical. They admitted of dialogue, music, singing, and dancing, combined by the use of some ingenious fable into a whole. They were made and performed for the court and the houses of the nobles, and the scenery was as gorgeous and varied as the scenery of the playhouse proper was poor and unchanging. Arriving for the first time at any repute in Henry VIII.'s time, they reached splendour under James and Charles I. Great men took part in them. When Ben Jonson wrote them, Inigo Jones made the scenery and Lawes the music; and Lord Bacon, Whitelock, and Selden sat in committee for the last great masque presented to Charles. Milton himself made them worthier by writing *Comus*, and their scenic decoration was soon introduced into the regular theatres.

90. **Beaumont and Fletcher** worked together, and belong not only in date, but in spirit, to the reign of James. In two plays, *Henry VIII.* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Fletcher has been linked to Shakespeare. With Beaumont as fellow-worker and counsellor, he wrote about a third of the more than fifty plays which go under

their names. Beaumont died, aged thirty, in 1616, Fletcher, aged fifty, in 1625. The creative power of the Elizabethan time has no more striking example than in their vast production. The inventiveness of the plays is astonishing, and their plots are almost always easily connected and well supported. Far the greater part of the work was done by Fletcher, but it has been tried to trace Beaumont's hand chiefly in such fine tragedies as *The Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster*. In comedy Fletcher is gay, and quick, and interesting. In tragedy and comedy alike, his level of goodness is equal, but then we have none of those magnificent outbursts of imaginative passion to which, up to this time, we have been accustomed. *The Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher is a lovely pastoral, and the lyrics which diversify his plays have even some of the charm of Shakespeare.

He and his fellows represent a distinct change, and not for the better, in the drama — a kind of *fourth stage*. Its poetry is on the whole less masculine. Its blank verse is rendered smoother and sweeter by the incessant addition of an eleventh syllable, but it is also enfeebled. This weak ending, by the additional freedom and elasticity it gave to the verse, was suited to the rapid dialogue of comedy, but the dignity of tragedy was lowered by it. The change is also seen in other matters. In the previous plays moral justice is done. The good are divided from the bad. Fletcher seems quite indifferent to this. In the previous plays,

men and women, save in Shakespeare, are coarse and foul enough at times, but they are so by nature or under furious passion. In Fletcher, there is a natural indecency, an every-day foulness of thought, which belongs to the good and the bad alike. The women are, when good, beyond nature, and, when bad, below it. The situations invented tend to be studiously out of the way, beyond the natural aspects of humanity. The aim of art has changed for the worse. It strives for the strange and the sensational. Even JOHN WEBSTER lost some of the power his genius gave him by the ghastly situations he chose to dwell upon. Yet he all but redeemed the worst of them by the intensity of his imagination, and by the soul-piercing power with which, in a few words, he sounds the depths of the human heart when it is wrought by remorse, by sorrow, by fear, or by wrath to its greatest point of passion. Moreover, in his worst characters there is some redeeming touch, and this poetic pity saves his sensationalism from weariness, and brings him nearer to Shakespeare than others of his time. His two greatest plays, things which will be glorious forever in poetry, are *The Duchess of Malfi*, acted in 1616, and the *White Devil, Vittoria Corrombona*, printed in 1612. One other play of the time is held to approach them in poetic quality, *The Changeling*, by Thomas Middleton, but it does so only in parts.

91. **Decay of the Drama.** — In the next dramatists, in the followers, if I may thus class them, of MASSINGER

and FORD, the change for the worse in the drama is more marked than in the work of those of whom we have been speaking. The poetic and creative qualities are both less, the sensationalism is greater, the foulness of language increases, the situations are more out of nature, the versé is clumsier and more careless, the composition and connexion of the plots are tumbled and confused. But these statements are only moderately true of Massinger and Ford. They stand at the head of the rapid decay of the drama, but they still retain a predominant part of that which made the Elizabethans great. Massinger's first dated play was the *Virgin Martyr*, 1620. He lived poor, and died "a stranger," in 1639. In these twenty years he wrote thirty-seven plays, of which the *New Way to Pay Old Debts* is the best known by its character of Sir Giles Overreach. His versification and language are flexible and strong, "and seem to rise out of the passions he describes." He speaks the tongue of real life. He is greater than he seems to be. Like Fletcher, there is a steady equality in his work. Coarse, even foul as he is in speech, he is the most moral of the secondary dramatists. Nowhere is his work so forcible as when he represents the brave man struggling through trial to victory, the pure woman suffering for the sake of truth and love; or when he describes the terrors that conscience brings on injustice and cruelty. JOHN FORD, his contemporary, published his first play, the *Lover's Melancholy*, in 1629, and five years after, *Perkin War-*

beck, one of the best historical dramas after Shakespeare. Between these dates appeared others, of which the best are the *Broken Heart* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. He carried to an extreme the tendency of the drama to unnatural and horrible subjects, but he did so with great power. He has no comic humour, but few men have described better the worn and tortured human heart. A crowd of dramatists carried on the production of plays till the Commonwealth. Some names alone we can mention here — Thomas Heywood, Henry Glapthorne, Richard Broome, William Rowley, Thomas Randolph, Nabbes, and Davenport. Of these "all of whom," says Lamb, "spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common," James Shirley is the best and last. He lived till 1666. In him the fire and passion of the old time pass away, but some of the delicate poetry remains, and in him the Elizabethan drama dies. Sir John Suckling and Davenant, who wrote plays before the Commonwealth, can scarcely be called even decadent Elizabethans. In 1642 the theatres were closed during the calamitous times of the Civil War. Strolling players managed to exist with difficulty, and against the law, till 1656, when Sir William Davenant had his opera of the *Siege of Rhodes* acted in London. It was the beginning of a new drama, in every point but impurity different from the old, and four years after, at the Restoration, it broke loose from the prison of Puritanism to indulge in a shameless license.

In this rapid sketch of the drama in England we have been carried on beyond the death of Elizabeth to the date of the Restoration. It was necessary, because it keeps the whole story together. We now return to the time that followed the accession of James I.

CHAPTER V

FROM ELIZABETH'S DEATH TO THE RESTORATION, 1603–1660

92. **The Literature of this Period** may fairly be called Elizabethan, but not so altogether. The prose retained the manner of the Elizabethan time and the faults of its style, but gradually grew into greater excellence, spread itself over larger fields of thought, and took up a greater variety of subjects. The poetry, on the whole, declined. It exaggerated the vices of the Elizabethan art, and lessened its virtues. But this is not the whole account of the matter. We must add that a new prose, of greater force of thought and of a simpler style than the Elizabethan, arose in the writings of a theologian like Chillingworth, an historian like Clarendon, and a philosopher like Hobbes: and that a new type of poetry, distinct from the poetry of fantastic wit into which Elizabethan poetry had descended, was written by some of the lyrical writers. It was Elizabethan in its lyric note, but it was not obscure. It had grace, simplicity, and smoothness. In its greater art and clearness it tells us that the critical school is at hand.

93. **Prose Literature. James I.** — The greatest prose triumph of this time was the *Authorised Version* of the Bible. There is no need to dwell on it, nor on all it has done for the literature of England. It lives in almost every book of worth and imagination, and its style, especially when the subject soars, is inspired by the spirits of fitness and beauty and melody. Philosophy passed from Elizabeth into the reign of James I. with Francis Bacon. The splendour of the form and of the English prose of the *Advancement of Learning*, two books of which were published in 1605, raises it into the realm of pure literature. It was expanded into nine Latin books in 1623, and with the *Novum Organon*, finished in 1620, and the *Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis*, 1622, formed the *Instauratio Magna*. The impulse these books gave to research, and to the true method of research, awoke scientific inquiry in England; and before the Royal Society was constituted in the reign of Charles II., our science, though far behind that of the Continent, had done some good work. William Harvey lectured on the circulation of the blood in 1615, and during the Civil War and the Commonwealth men like Robert Boyle, the chemist, John Wallis, the mathematician, and others, met in William Petty's rooms at Brazenose, and prepared the way for Newton.

94. **History**, except in the publication of the earlier *Chronicles* of Archbishop Parker, does not appear in the later part of Elizabeth's reign, but under James I. Camden, Spelman, Selden, and Speed continued the anti-

quarian researches of Stow and Grafton. Bacon wrote a dignified *History of Henry VII.*, and Daniel the poet, in his *History of England to the Time of Edward III.*, 1613–18, was one of the first to throw history into such a literary form as to make it popular. KNOLLES's *History of the Turks*, 1603, and SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S vast sketch of the *History of the World*, show how for the first time history spread itself beyond English interests. Raleigh's book, written in the peaceful evening of a stormy life, and in the quiet of his prison, is not only literary from the impulsive passages which adorn it, but from its still spirit of melancholy thought. In 1614, John Selden's *Titles of Honour* added to the accurate work he had done in Latin on the English Records, and his *History of Tithes* was written with the same careful regard for truth in 1618.

95. **Miscellaneous Literature.** — The pleasure of Travel, still lingering among us from Elizabeth's reign, found a quaint voice in Thomas Coryat's *Crudities*, which, in 1611, describes his journey through France and Italy; and in George Sandys' book, 1615, which tells his journey in the East; while Henry Wotton's *Letters from Italy* are pleasant reading. The care with which Samuel Purchas embodied (1613) in *Purchas his Pilgrimage* ("his own in matter, though borrowed") and in *Hakluyt's Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625), the great deeds, sea voyages, and land travels of adventurers, brings us back to the time when England went out to win the world. The painting of short "Characters"

was begun by Sir Thomas Overbury's book in 1614, and carried on in the following reign by John Earle and Joseph Hall, who became bishops. This kind of literature marks the interest in individual life which now began to arise, and which soon took form in Biography.

96. **In the Caroline Period and the Commonwealth, Prose** grew into a nearer approach to the finished instrument it became after the Restoration. History was illuminated, and its style dignified, by the work of Clarendon — the *History of the Rebellion* (begun in 1641) and his own *Life*. Thomas May wrote the *History of the Parliament* of 1640, a book with a purpose. Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain*, 1656, may in style and temper be put alongside of his *Worthies of England* in 1662.

In Theology and Philosophy the masters of prose at this time were Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Hobbes. It is a comfort amidst the noisy war of party to breathe the calm spiritual air of *The Great Exemplar* and the *Holy Living and Dying* which Taylor published at the close of the reign of Charles I. They had been preceded in 1647 by the *Liberty of Prophesying*, in which, agreeing with his contemporaries, John Hales and William Chillingworth, he pleaded the cause of religious toleration, and of rightness of life as more important than correct theology. Taylor was the most eloquent of men, and the most facile of orators. Laden with thought, his books are read for their sweet and deep devotion (a quality which also belonged to his fellow-writer, Lancelot

Andrewes), even more than for their impassioned and convoluted outbreaks of beautiful words. On the Puritan side, the fine sermons of Richard Sibbes converted Richard Baxter, whose manifold literary work only ended in the reign of James II. One little thing of his, written at the close of the Civil War, became a household book in England. There used to be few cottages which did not possess a copy of the *Saints' Everlasting Rest.* The best work of Hobbes belonged to Charles I. and the Commonwealth, but will better be noticed hereafter. The other great prose writer is one of a number of men whose productions may be classed under the title of Miscellaneous Literature. He is Sir Thomas Browne, who, born in 1605, died in 1682. In 1642 his *Religio Medici* was printed, and the book ran over Europe. The *Enquiry into Vulgar Errors* followed in 1646, and the *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-Burial,* in 1658. These books, with other happy things of his, have by their quaintness, their fancy, and their special charm always pleased the world, and often kindled weary prose into fresh production. We may class with them Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy,* a book of inventive wit and scattered learning, and Thomas Fuller's *Holy and Profane State* and *Worthies of England,* in which gaiety and piety, good sense and whimsical fancy meet. This kind of writing was greatly increased by the setting up of libraries, where men dipped into every kind of literature. It was in James I.'s reign that Sir Thomas Bodley established the Bodleian at Oxford, and Sir Robert Cotton

a library now in the British Museum. A number of writers took part in the Puritan and Church controversies, among whom for graphic force William Prynne stands out clearly. But the great controversialist was Milton. His prose is still, under the Commonwealth, Elizabethan in style. It has the fire and violence, the eloquence and diffuseness of the earlier literature, but in spite of the praise its style has received, it can in reality be scarcely called a style. It has all the faults a prose style can have except obscurity and the commonplace. Its magnificent storms of eloquence ought to be in poetry, and it never charms, though it amazes, except when Milton becomes purposely simple in personal narrative. It has no humour, but it has almost unexampled individuality and ferocity. Among this tempestuous pamphleteering one pamphlet is almost singular in its masterly and uplifted thought, and the style only rarely loses its dignity. This is the *Areopagitica*. In pleasant contrast to these controversies arises the gentle literature of Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, 1653, a book which resembles in its quaint and garrulous style the rustic scenery and prattling rivers that it celebrates, and marks the quiet interest in country life which had now arisen in England. Prose, then, in the time of James and Charles I., and of the Commonwealth, had largely developed its powers.

97. **The Poetry of the Reign of James I.** — It is said that during this reign and the following one, poetry declined. On the whole that is true, but it is true with

many modifications. We must remember that Shakespeare and many of the Elizabethan poets, like Drayton and Daniel, did their finest work in the reign of James I. Yet there was decline. The various elements which we have noticed in the poetry of Elizabeth's reign, without the exception even of the slight Catholic element, though opposed to each other, were filled with one spirit — the love of England and the queen. Nor were they ever sharply divided; they are found interwoven, and modifying one another in the same poet, as for instance Puritanism and Chivalry in Spenser, Catholicism and Love in Constable: and all are mixed together in Shakespeare and the dramatists. This unity of spirit in poetry became less and less after the queen's death. The elements remained, but they were separated. The cause of this was that the strife in politics between the Divine Right of Kings and Liberty, and in religion between the Church and the Puritans, grew so defined and intense that England ceased to be at one, and the poets represented the parties, not the whole, of England. Then, too, that general passion and life which inflamed everything Elizabethan lessened, and as it lessened, the faults of the Elizabethan work became more prominent; they were even supposed to be excellences. Hence the fantastic, far-fetched, involved style, which was derived from the *Euphues* and the *Arcadia*, grew into favour and was developed in verse, till it ended by greatly injuring good sense and clearness in English poetry. In the reaction from this the critical and classical school began. Again,

when passion lessens, original work lessens, and imitation begins. The reign of James is marked by a class of poets who imitated Spenser. Giles Fletcher in his *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, 1610, owned Spenser as his master. So did his brother Phineas Fletcher, whose *Purple Island*, an allegory of the human body, 1633, has both grace and sweetness. We may not say that William Browne imitated, but only that he was influenced by Spenser. His *Britannia's Pastorals* in two parts, 1613–16, followed by the seven eclogues of the *Shepherd's Pipe*, are an example in true poetry of the ever-recurring element in English poetry, pleasure in country life and scenery, which from this time forth grew through Milton, Wither, Marvell, and then, after an apparent death, through Thomson, Gray, and Collins, into its wonderful flower in our own century. These, if we include the poetry of the Dramatists, especially the *Underwoods* of Ben Jonson, and the poems already mentioned of Drummond and Stirling, are the poets of the reign of James I. They link back to Elizabeth's time and its temper, and it may be said of them that they have no special turn, save that which arises from their own individuality. *That* cannot be said of the poets of Charles I.'s reign, even though they may be classed as writing under the influence of Ben Jonson and of Donne.

98. **The Caroline Poets**, as they are called, are love poets or religious poets. Often, as in the case of Herrick and Crashaw, they combined both kinds into a single volume. Sometimes they were only religious like Her

bert, sometimes only love poets like Lovelace and Suckling. But whatever they were, they were as individual as Botticelli, with whose position and whose contemporaries in painting they may, with much justice, be compared. The greatest of these was ROBERT HERRICK. The gay and glancing charm of *The Hesperides*, 1648, in which Horace and Tibullus seem to mingle; their peculiar art which never misses its aim, nor fails in exquisite execution; the almost equal power of *The Noble Numbers*, published along with the *Hesperides*, in which the spiritual side of Herrick's nature expressed itself, make him, within his self-chosen and limited range, the most remarkable of those who at this time sat below the mountain top on which Milton was alone. Close beside him, but more unequal, was THOMAS CAREW, whose lyrical poems, well known as they are, do not prevent our pleasure in his graver work like the *Elegy on Donne*. Greater in imagination, but more unequal still, was RICHARD CRASHAW. One of his poems, *The Flaming Heart*, expresses in its name his religious nature and his art. He does not burn with a steady fire, he flames to heaven; and when he does, he is divine in music and in passion. At other times he is one of the worst of the fantasticals, of those lovers of the quaint for quaintness' sake, among whom the exclusively *religious poets* of the time are sadly to be classed. There is GEORGE HERBERT, whose *Temple*, 1631, is, by the purity and devotion of its poems, dear to all. It is his quiet religion, his quaint, contemplative, vicarage-garden note of thought and scholarship which

pleases most, and will always please, the calm piety of England. He also is individual, and so is HENRY VAUGHAN, whose *Sacred Poems*, 1651, unequal as a whole, love nature dearly, and leap sometimes into a higher air of poetry than Herbert could attain; "transcend our wonted themes, and into glory peep." Nor must we forget WILLIAM HABINGTON, who mingled his devotion to Roman Catholicism with the praises of his wife under the name of *Castara*, 1634; nor GEORGE WITHER, who sent forth, just before the Civil War began, when he left the king for the Parliament, his *Hallelujah*, 1641, a noble series of religious poems; nor FRANCIS QUARLES, whose *Divine Emblems*, 1635, is still read in the cottages of England. These poets, with Henry More, the Platonist, and Joseph Beaumont, the friend of Crashaw and the rival of More, are far below (Wither's work being excepted) both Herbert and Vaughan, and bring to an end the religious poetry of this curious transition time. I have omitted some poems of Cowley and of Edmund Waller, which appeared during the Commonwealth, because both these poets belong to a new class of poetry, the classical poetry of the Restoration. Between this new kind of poetry, which rose to full power in Dryden, and the dying poetry of the transition, stands alone the majestic work of a great genius who touches the great Elizabethan time with one hand and our own time with the other. But before we speak of Milton, a word must be said of the lyrics.

99. **The Songs and other Lyrical Poetry.** — All through

the period between James I. and the Restoration, Song-writing went on, and was more natural and less "metaphysical" than the other forms of poetry. The elements of decay attacked it slowly; those of brightness and passion, nature and gaiety, continued to live in it. Moreover, the time was remarkable for no small number of lyrical poems, other than songs, of a strange loveliness, in which the Elizabethan excellences were enhanced by a special, particular grace, due partly to the more isolated life some of the poets led, and partly to the growth among them of a more artistic method.

With regard to the Songs, a distinct set of them, on the most various subjects, are to be found in the Dramatists, from Ben Jonson to Shirley. Another set has been collected out of the many Song-books which appeared with music and words. Many arose in the court of Charles I. and among the Royalists in the country,—Cavalier songs—on love, on constancy, on dress, on fleeting fancies of every kind. Others were on battle and death for the king; and a few, sterner and more ideal, on the Puritan side. The same power of song-writing went on for a brief time after the Restoration, but finally perished in the political ballad which was sung about the streets by the political parties of the Revolution. Then the song-lyric of love was almost silent till the days of Burns.

With regard to the Lyrical poems, it is impossible to mention all that are worthy, but an age which produced the masques, the poems, and the *Sad Shepherd* of Ben

Jonson; which heard the lyrical measures of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess;* which read with joy Herrick's *Corinna* and his country lyrics; which wished, while it had its delight in Wither's *Philarete*, that it was not so long; which felt a finer thrill than usual of the imagination in Marvell's *Emigrants in the Bermudas* and *The Thoughts in a Garden;* which was caught, as it were into another world, by the *Allegro*, the *Penseroso*, the songs in *Comus* and the *Arcades*, and by the *Lycidas* of Milton — can scarcely be called an age of decay. There was decline, on the whole. We feel what had passed away when we come to the days of the Restoration. But the Elizabethan lyrical day died in a lovely sunset. And as if to make this clear, we meet with Milton who bore the passion, the force, and the beauty of the past along with his own grandeur into the age of Dryden.

100. **John Milton** was the last of the Elizabethans, and, except Shakespeare, far the greatest of them all. Born in 1608, in Bread Street (close by the Mermaid Tavern), he may have seen Shakespeare, for he remained till he was sixteen in London. His literary life may be said to begin with his entrance into Cambridge, in 1625, the year of the accession of Charles I. Nicknamed the "Lady of Christ's" from his beauty, delicate taste, and moral life, he soon attained a reputation by his Latin poems and discourses, and by his English poems which revealed as clear and original a genius as that of Chaucer and Spenser. Of Milton even more than of the two others, it may be said that he was "whole in himself, and owed to none." The

Ode to the Nativity, 1629, the third poem he composed, while it went back to the Elizabethan age in beauty, in instinctive fire, went forward into a new world of art, the world where the architecture of the lyric is finished with majesty and music. The next year heard the noble sounding strains of *At a Solemn Music;* and the sonnet, *On Attaining the Age of Twenty-three*, reveals in dignified beauty that intense personality which lives, like a force, through every line he wrote. He left the university in 1632, and went to live at Horton, near Windsor, where he spent five years, steadily reading the Greek and Latin writers, and amusing himself with mathematics and music. Poetry was not neglected. The *Allegro* and *Penseroso* were written in 1633 and probably the *Arcades; Comus* was acted in 1634, and *Lycidas* composed in 1637. They prove that though Milton was Puritan in heart his Puritanism was of that earlier type which disdained neither the arts nor letters. But they represent a growing revolt from the Court and the Church. The *Penseroso* prefers the contemplative life to the mirthful, and *Comus*, though a masque, rose into a celestial poem to the glory of temperance, and under its allegory attacked the Court. Three years later, *Lycidas* interrupts its exquisite stream of poetry with a fierce and resolute onset on the greedy shepherds of the Church. Milton had taken his Presbyterian bent.

In 1638 he went to Italy, the second home of so many of the English poets, visited Florence where he saw Galileo, and then passed on to Rome. At Naples he

heard the sad news of civil war, which determined him to return; "inasmuch as I thought it base to be travelling at my ease for amusement, while my fellow-countrymen at home were fighting for liberty." At the meeting of the Long Parliament we find him in a house in Aldersgate, where he lived till 1645. He had projected while abroad a great epic poem on the subject of Arthur, but in London his mind changed, and among a number of subjects, tended at last to *Paradise Lost*, which he meant to throw into the form of a Greek Tragedy with lyrics and choruses.

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101. **Milton's Prose. The Commonwealth.** — Suddenly his whole life changed, and for twenty years — 1640–60 — he was carried out of art into politics, out of poetry into prose. Most of the *Sonnets*, however, belong to this time. Stately, rugged, or graceful, as he pleased to make them, some with the solemn grandeur of Hebrew psalms, others having the classic ease of Horace, some of his own grave tenderness, they are true, unlike those of Shakespeare and Spenser, to the correct form of this difficult kind of poetry. But they were all he could now do of his true work. Before the Civil War began in 1642, he had written five vigorous pamphlets against Episcopacy. Six more pamphlets appeared in the next two years. One of these was the *Areopagitica; or, Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, 1644, a bold and eloquent attack on the censorship of the press by the Presbyterians. Another, remarkable, like the *Areopagitica*, for its finer prose, was a tract *On Educa-*

tion. The four pamphlets in which he advocated conditional divorce made him still more the horror of the Presbyterians. In 1646 he published his poems, and in that year the sonnet *On the Forcers of Conscience* shows that he had wholly ceased to be Presbyterian. His political pamphlets begin when his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* defended in 1649 the execution of the king. The *Eikonoclastes* answered the *Eikon Basilike* (a portraiture of the sufferings of the king); and his famous Latin *Defence for the People of England*, 1651, replied to Salmasius's *Defence of Charles I.*, and inflicted so pitiless a lashing on the great Leyden scholar that Milton's fame went over the whole of Europe. In the next year he wholly lost his sight. But he continued his work (being Latin secretary since 1649) when Cromwell was made Protector, and wrote another *Defence for the English People*, 1654, and a further *Defence of Himself* against scurrilous charges. This closed the controversy in 1655. In the last year of the Protector's life he began the *Paradise Lost*, but the death of Cromwell threw him back into politics, and three more pamphlets on the questions of a Free Church and a Free Commonwealth were useless to prevent the Restoration. It was a wonder he was not put to death in 1660, and he was in hiding and also in custody for a time. At last he settled in a house near Bunhill Fields. It was here that *Paradise Lost* was finished, before the end of 1665, and then published in 1667.

102. **Paradise Lost.** — We may regret that Milton was

shut away from his art during twenty years of controversy. But it may be that the poems he wrote when the great cause he fought for had closed in seeming defeat but real victory, gained from its solemn issues and from the moral grandeur with which he wrought for its ends their majestic movement, their grand style, and their grave beauty. During the struggle he had never forgotten his art. "I may one day hope," he said, speaking of his youthful studies, "to have ye again, in a still time, when there shall be no chiding. Not in these Noises," and the saying strikes the note of calm sublimity which is kept in *Paradise Lost*.

As we read the great epic, we feel that the lightness of heart of the *Allegro*, that even the quiet classic philosophy of the *Comus*, are gone. The beauty of the poem is like that of a stately temple, which, vast in conception, is involved in detail. The style is the greatest in the whole range of English poetry. Milton's intellectual force supports and condenses his imaginative force, and his art is almost too conscious of itself. Sublimity is its essential difference. The subject is one phase of the great and universal subject of high poetic thought and passion, that struggle of Light with Darkness, of Evil with Good, which, arising in a hundred myths, keeps its undying attraction to the present day. But its great difficulty in his case was that he was obliged to interest us, for a great part of the poem, in two persons, who, being innocent, were without any such play of human passion and trouble as we find in Œdipus, Æneas, Hamlet, or Alceste.

In the noble art with which this is done Milton is supreme. The interest of the story collects at first round the character of Satan, but he grows meaner as the poem develops, and his second degradation after he has destroyed innocence is one of the finest and most consistent motives in the poem. This at once disposes of the view that Milton meant Satan to be the hero of the epic. His hero is Man. The deep tenderness of Milton, his love of beauty, the passionate fitness of his words to his work, his religious depth, fill the scenes in which he paints Paradise, our parents and their fall, and at last all thought and emotion centre round Adam and Eve, until the closing lines leave us with their lonely image on our minds. In every part of the poem, in every character in it, as indeed in all his poems, Milton's intense individuality appears. It is a pleasure to find it. The egotism of such a man, said Coleridge, is a revelation of spirit.

103. **Milton's Later Poems.** — *Paradise Lost* was followed by *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, published together in 1671. *Paradise Regained* opens with the journey of Christ into the wilderness after his baptism, and its four books describe the temptation of Christ by Satan, and the answers and victory of the Redeemer. The speeches in it overwhelm the action, and their learned argument is only relieved by a few descriptions; but these, as in that of Athens, are done with Milton's highest power. Its solemn beauty of quietude, and a more severe style than that of *Paradise Lost*, make us feel in it that Milton has grown older.

In *Samson Agonistes* the style is still severer, even to the verge of a harshness which the sublimity alone tends to modify. It is a choral drama, after the Greek model. Samson in his blindness is described, is called on to make sport for the Philistines, and overthrows them in the end. Samson represents the fallen Puritan cause, and Samson's victorious death Milton's hopes for the final triumph of that cause. The poem has all the grandeur of the last words of a great man in whom there was now "calm of mind, all passion spent." It is also the last word of the music of the Elizabethan drama long after its notes seemed hushed, and its deep sound is strange in the midst of the shallow noise of the Restoration. Soon afterwards, November, 1674, blind and old and fallen on evil days, Milton died; but neither blindness, old age, nor evil days could lessen the inward light, nor impair the imaginative power with which he sang, it seemed with the angels, the "undisturbed song of pure concent," until he joined himself, at last, with those "just spirits who wear victorious palms."

104. **His Work.**—To the greatness of the artist Milton joined the majesty of a clear and lofty character. His poetic style was as stately as his character, and proceeded from it. Living at a time when criticism began to purify the verse of England, and being himself well acquainted with the great classical models, his work is seldom weakened by the false conceits and the intemperance of the Elizabethan writers, and yet is as imaginative as theirs, and as various. He has not their naturalness, nor all

their intensity, but he has a larger grace, a lovelier colour, a closer eye for nature, a more finished art, and a sublime dignity they did not possess. All the kinds of poetry which he touched he touched with the ease of great strength, and with so much energy, that they became new in his hands. He put a fresh life into the masque, the sonnet, the elegy, the descriptive lyric, the song, the choral drama; and he created the epic in England. The lighter love poem he never wrote, and we are grateful that he kept his coarse satirical power apart from his poetry. In some points he was untrue to his descent from the Elizabethans, for he had no dramatic faculty, and he had no humour. He summed up in himself the learned and artistic influences of the English Renaissance, and handed them on to us. His taste was as severe, his verse as polished, his method and language as strict as those of the school of Dryden and Pope that grew up when he was old. A literary past and present thus met in him, nor did he fail, like all the greatest men, to make a cast into the future. He established the poetry of pure natural description. Lastly, he did not represent in any way the England that followed the Stuarts, but he did represent Puritan England, and the whole spirit of Puritanism from its cradle to its grave.

105. **The Pilgrim's Progress.** — We might say that Puritanism said its last great words with Milton, were it not that its spirit continued in English life, were it not also that four years after his death, in 1678, JOHN BUNYAN, who had previously written religious poems, and in

1665 the *Holy City*, published the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is the journey of Christian the Pilgrim from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. The *second part* was published in 1684. In 1682 he had written the allegory of the *Holy War*, and in 1680 *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, a curious little story. I class the *Pilgrim's Progress* here, because in its imaginative fervour and imagery, and in its quality of naturalness, it belongs to the spirit of the Elizabethan times. Written by a man of the people, it is a people's book; and its simple form grew out of passionate feeling, and not out of self-conscious art. The passionate feeling was religious, and in painting the pilgrim's progress towards Heaven, and his battle with the world and temptation and sorrow, the book touched those deep and universal interests which belong to poor and rich. Its language, the language of the Bible, and its allegorical form, initiated a plentiful prose literature of a similar kind. But none have equalled it. Its form is almost epic: its dramatic dialogue, its clear types of character, its vivid descriptions, as of Vanity Fair, and of places, such as the Valley of the Shadow of Death and the Delectable Mountains, which represent states of the human soul, have given an equal but a different pleasure to children and men, to the villager and the scholar.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE DEATH OF POPE AND SWIFT, 1660–1745

106. **Poetry. Change of Style.** — We have seen the natural style as distinguished from the artificial in the Elizabethan poets. Style became not only natural but artistic when it was made by a great genius like Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Spenser, for a first-rate poet creates rules of art: his work is filled with laws which other men see, collect, and obey. Art, which is the just and lovely arrangement of nature to fulfil a nobly chosen aim, is then born. But when the art of poetry is making, the second-rate poets, inspired only by their feelings, will write in a natural style unrestrained by rules, that is, they will put their feelings into verse without caring much for the form in which they do it. As long as they live in the midst of a youthful national life, and feel an ardent sympathy with it, their style will be fresh and impassioned, and give pleasure because of the strong feeling that inspires it. But it will also be extravagant and unrestrained in its use of images and words because of its want of art. This is the general history of the style

of the second-class poets of the middle period of Elizabeth's reign, and even Shakespeare affords examples of this want of art. (2) Afterwards the national life grew chill, and the feelings of the poets also chill. Then the want of art in the style made itself felt. The far-fetched images, the hazarded meanings, the over-fanciful way of putting thoughts, the sensational expression of feeling, in which the Elizabethan poets indulged, not only appeared in all their ugliness when they were inspired by no ardent feeling, but were indulged in far more than before. Men tried to produce by extravagant use of words the same results that a passionate sense of life had produced, and the more they failed the more extravagant and fantastic they became, till at last their poetry ceased to have clear meaning. This is the general history of the style of the poets from the later days of Elizabeth till the Civil War. (3) The natural style, unregulated by art, had thus become unnatural. When it had reached that point, men began to feel how necessary it was that the work of poetry should be subjected to the rules of art, and two influences partly caused and partly supported this desire. One was the influence of Milton. Milton, first by his superb genius, which, as I said, creates of itself rules of art, and secondly by his knowledge and imitation of the great classical models, was able to give the first example in England of a pure, grand, and finished style; and in blank verse, in the lyric and the sonnet, wrote for the first time with absolute correctness. Another influence was that of the movement all over Europe towards inquiry

into the right way of doing things, and into the truth of things, a movement we shall soon see at work in science, politics, and religion. In poetry it produced a school of criticism which first took form in France, and the influence of Boileau, La Fontaine, and others who were striving after greater finish and neatness of expression, told on England now. It is an influence which has been exaggerated. It is absurd to place the "creaking lyre" of Boileau side by side with Dryden's "long resounding march and energy divine." Our critical school of poets have few French qualities in them even when they imitate the French. (4) Further, our own poets had already, before the Restoration, begun the critical work, and the French influence served only to give it a greater impulse. We shall see the growth of a colder and more correct phrasing and versification in Waller, Denham, and Cowley. Vigour was given to this new method in art by Dryden, and perfection of artifice added to it by Pope. The *artificial* style succeeded to and extinguished the *natural*, or to put it otherwise, a merely intellectual poetry finally overcame a poetry in which emotion always accompanied thought.

107. **Change of Poetic Subject.** — The subject of the Elizabethan poets was Man as influenced by the Passions, and it was treated from the side of natural feeling. This was fully and splendidly done by Shakespeare. But after a time this subject followed, as we have seen in speaking of the drama, the same career as the style. It was treated in an extravagant and sensational manner,

and the representation of the passions tended to become unnatural or fantastic. Milton redeemed the subject from this vicious excess. He wrote in a grave and natural manner of the passions of the human heart; he made strong in English poetry the religious passions of love of God, of sorrow for sin, and he raised in song the moral passions into a solemn splendour. But with him the subject of man as influenced by the great passions died for a time. Dryden, Pope, and their followers turned to another subject. They left, except in Dryden's Dramas and Fables, the passions aside, and wrote of the things in which the intellect and the casuistical conscience, the social and political instincts in man, were interested. In this way the satiric, didactic, philosophical, and party poetry of a new school arose.

108. **The Poems in which the New School began** belong in date to the age before the Restoration, but in spirit and form they were the sources of the poetry which is called classical or critical, or artificial. EDMUND WALLER, SIR JOHN DENHAM, and ABRAHAM COWLEY are the precursors of Dryden. Waller remodelled the heroic couplet of Chaucer, and gave it the precise character which made it for nearly a century and a half the prevailing form of verse. He wrote his earliest poems about 1623, in precisely the same symmetrical manner as Dryden and Pope. His new manner was not followed for many years, till Denham published in 1642 his *Cooper's Hill*. "The excellence and dignity of rhyme were never fully known," said Dryden, "till Mr. Waller taught it, but this

sweetness of his lyric poetry was afterwards followed in the epic of Sir John Denham in his *Cooper's Hill*." The chill stream of this poem, which is neither "lyric" nor "epic," has the metrical cadence, but none of the grip and force of Dryden's verse. Cowley's earlier poems belong to the Elizabethan phantasies, but the later were, with the exception of some noble poems of personal feeling, cold and exact enough for the praise of the new school. He invented that curious misnomer — the Pindaric Ode — which, among all its numerous offspring, had but one splendid child in Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*. When Gray took up the ode again, Cowley was not his master. Sir W. Davenant's *Gondibert*, 1651, also an heroic poem, is another example of this transition. Worthless as poetry, it represents the new interest in political philosophy and in science that was arising, and preludes the intellectual poetry. Its preface discourses of rhyme and the rules of art, and embodies the critical influence which came over with the exiled court from France. The critical school had therefore begun even before Dryden's poems were written. The change was less sudden than it seemed.

Satiric poetry, soon to become a greater thing, was made during this transition time into a powerful weapon by two men, each on a different side. Andrew Marvell's *Satires*, after the Restoration, exhibit the Puritan's wrath with the vices of the court and king, and his shame for the disgrace of England among the nations. The *Hudibras* of SAMUEL BUTLER, in 1663, represents the fierce

reaction which had set in against Puritanism. It is justly famed for wit, learning, good sense, and ingenious drollery, and, in accordance with the new criticism, it is absolutely without obscurity. It is often as terse as Pope's best work. But it is too long, its wit wearies us at last, and it undoes the force of its attack on the Puritans by its exaggeration. Satire should have at least the semblance of truth; yet Butler calls the Puritans cowards. We turn now to the greatest of these poets in whom poetry is founded on intellect rather than on feeling, and whose verse is mostly devoted to argument and satire.

109. **John Dryden** was the first of the new, as Milton was the last of the elder, school of poetry. It was late in life that he gained fame. Born in 1631, he was a Cromwellite till the Restoration, when he began the changes which mark his life. His poem on the death of the Protector was soon followed by the *Astræa Redux*, which celebrated the return of Justice to the realm in the person of Charles II. The *Annus Mirabilis* appeared in 1667, and in this his metrical ease was first clearly marked. But his power of exact reasoning expressing itself with powerful and ardent ease in a rapid succession of condensed thoughts in verse, was not shown (save in drama) till he was fifty years old, in the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, the foremost of English satires. He had been a playwriter for fourteen years, till its appearance in 1681, and the rhymed plays which he had written enabled him to perfect the versification which is now so remarkable

in his work. The satire itself, written in mockery of the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Bill, attacked Shaftesbury as Achitophel, was kind to Monmouth as Absalom, and in its sketch of Buckingham as Zimri the poet avenged himself for the *Rehearsal*. It was the first fine example of that party poetry which became still more bitter and personal in the hands of Pope. It was followed by the *Medal*, a new attack on Shaftesbury, and the *Mac Flecknoe*, 1682, in which Shadwell, a rival poet, who had supported Shaftesbury's party, was made the witless successor of Richard Flecknoe, a poet of all kinds of poetry, and master of none. Then in the same year, after the arrest of Monmouth, the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared, all of which, except two hundred lines, was written by Nahum Tate. These were four terrible masterpieces of ruthless wit and portraiture. Then he turned to express his transient theology in verse, and the *Religio Laici*, 1682, defends and states the argument for the Church of England. It was perhaps poverty that led him to change his religion, and the *Hind and Panther*, 1687, is a model of melodious reasoning in behalf of the milk-white hind of the Church of Rome. The Dissenters are mercilessly treated under the image of the baser beasts; while at first the Panther, the Church of England, is gently touched, but in the end lashed with severity. However, Hind and Panther tell, at the close, two charming stories to one another. It produced in reply one of the happiest burlesques in English poetry, *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, the work of Charles

Montague (Lord Halifax), and Mat Prior. Deprived of his offices at the Revolution, Dryden turned again to the drama and to prose, but the failure of the last of his good plays in 1694, drove him again from the stage, and he gave himself up to his *Translation of Virgil* which he published in 1697. As a narrative poet his *Fables, Ancient and Modern*, finished late in life, in 1699, give him a high rank in this class of poetry. They sin from coarseness, but in style, in magnificent march of verse, in intellectual but not imaginative fire, in ease but not in grace, they are excellent. As a lyric poet his fame rests on the animated *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687, and on *Alexander's Feast*, 1697. From Milton's death, 1674, till his own in 1700, Dryden reigned undisputed, and round his throne in Will's Coffeehouse, where he sat as "Glorious John," we may place the names of the lesser poets, the Earls of Dorset, Roscommon, and Mulgrave, Sir Charles Sedley, and the Earl of Rochester. The lighter poetry of the court lived on in the two last. John Oldham won a short fame by his *Satire on the Jesuits*, 1679; and Bishop Ken, 1668, established, in his *Morning and Evening Hymns*, a new type of religious poetry.

110. **Prose Literature of the Restoration and Revolution. Criticism.** — As Dryden was now first in poetry, so he was in prose. No one can understand the poetry of this time, in its relation to the past, to the future, and to France, who does not read the Critical Essays prefixed to his dramas, *On the Historical Poem*, on dramatic rhyme, on *Heroic Plays*, on the classical writers, and his

Essay on Dramatic Poetry. He is in these essays, not only the leader of modern literary criticism, but the leader of that modern prose in which the style is easy, unaffected, moulded to the subject, and in which the proper words are put in the proper places. Dryden was a great originator.

111. **Science.** — During the Civil War the religious and political struggle absorbed the country, but yet, apart from the strife, a few men who cared for scientific matters met at one another's houses. Out of this little knot, after the Restoration, arose the Royal Society, embodied in 1662. Astronomy, experimental chemistry, medicine, mineralogy, zoölogy, botany, vegetable physiology, were all founded as studies, and their literature begun, in the age of the Restoration. One man's work was so great in science as to merit his name being mentioned among the literary men of England. In 1671 Isaac Newton laid his *Theory of Light* before the Royal Society; in the year before the Revolution his *Principia* established, by its proof of the theory of gravitation, the true system of the universe.

It was in political and religious knowledge, however, that the intellectual inquiry of the nation was most shown. When the thinking spirit succeeds the active and adventurous in a people, one of the first things they will think upon is the true method and grounds of government, both divine and human. Two sides will be taken: the side of authority and the side of reason in Religion; the side of authority and the side of individual liberty in Politics.

112. **The Theological Literature** of those who declared that reason was supreme as a test of truth, arose with some men who met at Lord Falkland's just before the Civil War, and especially with John Hales and William Chillingworth. The same kind of work, though modified towards more sedateness of expression, and less rationalistic, was now done by Archbishop Tillotson, and Bishop Burnet. In 1678, Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe* is perhaps the best book on the controversy which then took form against those who were called Atheists. A number of divines in the English Church took sides for Authority or Reason, or opposed the growing Deism during the latter half of the seventeenth century. It was an age of preachers, and Isaac Barrow, Newton's predecessor in the chair of mathematics at Cambridge, could preach, with grave and copious eloquence, for three hours at a time. Theological prose was strengthened by the publication of the sermons of Edward Stillingfleet and William Sherlock, and their adversary, Robert South, was as witty in rhetoric as he was fierce in controversy.

113. **Political Literature.** — The resistance to authority in the opposition to the theory of the Divine Right of Kings did not much enter into literature till after the severe blow that theory received in the Civil War. During the Commonwealth and after the Restoration the struggle took the form of a discussion on the abstract question of the Science of Government, and was mingled with an inquiry into the origin of society and the ground

of social life. THOMAS HOBBES, during the Commonwealth, was the first who dealt with the question from the side of abstract reason, and he is also, before Dryden, the first of all our prose writers whose style may be said to be uniform and correct, and adapted carefully to the subjects on which he wrote. His treatise, the *Leviathan*, 1651, declared (1) that the origin of all power was in the people, and (2) that the end of all power was the commonweal. It destroyed the theory of a Divine Right of Kings and Priests, but it created another kind of Divine Right when it said that the power lodged in rulers by the people could not be taken away by the people. Sir R. Filmer supported the side of Divine Right in his *Patriarcha*, published 1680. Henry Nevile, in his *Dialogue concerning Government*, and James Harrington in his romance, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, published at the beginning of the Commonwealth, contended that all secure government was to be based on property, but Nevile supported a monarchy, and Harrington — with whom I may class Algernon Sidney, whose political treatise on government is as statesmanlike as it is finely written — a democracy, on this basis. I may here mention that it was during this period, in 1667, that the first effort was made after a Science of Political Economy by Sir William Petty in his *Treatise on Taxes*. The *political pamphlet* was also begun at this time by Sir Roger L'Estrange, and George Savile, Lord Halifax.

114. **John Locke**, after the Revolution, in 1690, followed the two doctrines of Hobbes in his treatises on

Civil Government, but with these important additions — (1) that the people have a right to take away the power given by them to the ruler, (2) that the ruler is responsible to the people for the trust reposed in him, and (3) that legislative assemblies are Supreme as the voice of the people. This was the political philosophy of the Revolution. Locke carried the same spirit of free inquiry into the realm of religion, and in his *Letters on Toleration* laid down the philosophical grounds for liberty of religious thought. He finished by entering the realm of metaphysical inquiry. In 1690 appeared his *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*, in which he investigated its limits, and traced all ideas, and therefore all knowledge, to experience. In his clear statement of the way in which the Understanding works, in the way in which he guarded it and Language against their errors in the inquiry after truth, he did almost as much for the true method of thinking as Bacon had done for the science of nature.

115. The intellectual stir of the time produced, apart from the great movement of thought, a good deal of **Miscellaneous Literature.** The painting of short "characters" was carried on after the Restoration by Samuel Butler and W. Charleton. These "characters" had no personality, but as party spirit deepened, names thinly disguised were given to characters drawn of living men, and Dryden and Pope in poetry, and all the prose wits of the time of Queen Anne and George I., made personal and often violent sketches of their opponents a

special element in literature. On the other hand, Izaak Walton's *Lives*, in 1670, are examples of kind, agreeable, and careful Biography. Cowley's small volume, written shortly before his death in 1667, gave richness to the Essay, and its prose almost anticipated the prose of Dryden. John Evelyn's multitudinous writings are themselves a miscellany. He wrote on painting, sculpture, architecture, timber (the *Sylva*), on gardening, commerce, and he illustrates the searching spirit of the age. In William III.'s time Sir William Temple's pleasant *Essays* bring us in style and tone nearer to the great class of essayists of whom Addison was chief. Lady Rachel Russell's Letters begin the Letter-writing literature of England. Pepys (1660–9), and Evelyn, whose Diary grows full after 1640, gave rise to that class of gossiping Memoirs which has been of so much use in giving colour to history. History itself at this time is little better than memoirs, and such a name may be fairly given to Bishop Burnet's *History of his Own Time* and to his *History of the Reformation*. Finally Classical Criticism, in the discussion on the genuineness of the *Letters of Phalaris*, was created by Richard Bentley in 1697–9. Literature was therefore plentiful. It was also correct, but it was not inventive.

116. **The Literature of Queen Anne and the First Georges.** — With the closing years of William III. and the accession of Queen Anne (1702) a literature arose which was partly new and partly a continuance of that of the Restoration. The conflict between those who

took the oath to the new dynasty and the Nonjurors who refused, the hot blood that it produced, the war between Dissent and Church, and between the two parties which now took the names of Whig and Tory, produced a mass of political pamphlets, of which Daniel Defoe's and Swift's were the best; of songs and ballads, like *Lillibullero*, which were sung in every street; of squibs, reviews, of satirical poems and letters. Every one joined in it, and it rose to importance in the work of the greater men who mingled literary studies with their political excitement. In politics, all the abstract discussions we have mentioned ceased to be abstract, and became personal and practical, and the spirit of inquiry applied itself more closely to the questions of every-day life. The whole of this stirring literary life was concentrated in London, where the agitation of society was hottest; and it is round this vivid city life that the literature of Queen Anne and the two following reigns is best grouped.

117. **Party Literature.** It was, with a few exceptions, a Whig and Tory leaders enlisted on their sides the best poets and prose writers, who fiercely satirised and unduly praised them under names thinly disguised. Our "Augustan Age" was an age of unbridled slander. Personalities were sent to and fro like shots in battle. Those who could do this work well were well rewarded, but the rank and file of writers were left to starve. Literature was thus honoured not for itself, but for the sake of party. The result was that the abler men lowered it by making it a political tool, and the smaller men, the fry of Grub

Street, degraded it by using it in the same way, only in a baser manner. Their flattery was as abject as their abuse was shameless, and both were stupid. They received and deserved the merciless lashing which Pope was soon to give them in the *Dunciad*. Being a party literature, it naturally came to study and to look sharply into human character and into human life as seen in the great city. It debated subjects of literary and scientific inquiry and of philosophy with great ability, but without depth. It discussed all the varieties of social life, and painted town society more vividly than has been done before or since; and it was so wholly taken up with this, that country life and its interests, except in the writings of Addison, were scarcely touched by it at all. Criticism being so active, the *form* in which thought was expressed was now especially dwelt on, and the result was that the style of English prose became even more simple than in Dryden's hands; and English verse, leaving Dryden's power behind it, reached a neatness of expression as exquisite as it was artificial. At the same time, and for the same reasons, Nature, Passion, and Imagination decayed in poetry.

118. **Alexander Pope** absorbed and reflected all these elements. Born in 1688, he wrote tolerable verse at twelve years old; the *Pastorals* appeared in 1709, and two years afterwards he took full rank as the critical poet in the *Essay on Criticism* (1711). The next year saw the first cast of his *Rape of the Lock*, the most brilliant occasional poem in our language. This closed what we may call his first period. In 1712 his sacred pastoral,

The Messiah, appeared, and in 1713, when he published *Windsor Forest*, he became known to Swift and to Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke. When these, with Gay, Parnell, Prior, Arbuthnot, and others, formed the Scriblerus Club, Pope joined them, and soon rose into great fame by his Translation of the *Iliad* (1715–20), and by the Translation of the *Odyssey* (1723–5), in which he was assisted by Fenton and Broome. Being now at ease, for he received fully 9000*l.* for this work, he published from his retreat at Twickenham, and in bitter scorn of the poetasters and of all the petty scribblers who annoyed him, the *Dunciad*, 1728. Its original hero was Lewis Theobald, but when the fourth book was published, under Warburton's influence, in 1742, Colley Cibber was enthroned as the King of Dunces instead of Theobald. The fiercest and finest of Pope's satires, it closes his second period which breathes the savageness of Swift. The third phase of Pope's literary life was closely linked to his friend Bolingbroke. It was in conversation with him that he originated the *Essay on Man* (1732–4) and the *Imitations of Horace*. The *Moral Essays*, or Epistles to men and women, were written to praise those whom he loved, and to satirise the bad poets and the social follies of the day, and all who disliked him or his party. Among these, who has not read the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot?* In the last few years of his life, Bishop Warburton, the writer of the *Legation of Moses* and editor of Shakespeare, helped him to fit the *Moral Essays* into the plan of which the *Essay on Man* formed

part. Warburton was Pope's last great friend; but almost his only old friend. By 1740 nearly all the members of his literary circle were dead, and a new race of poets and writers had grown up. In 1744 he died. His *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady* and the Epistle of *Eloisa to Abelard* show how he once tried to handle the passions of sorrow and love. The masterly form into which he threw the philosophical principles he condensed into didactic poetry make them more impressive than they have a right to be. The *Essay on Man*, though its philosophy is poor and not his own, is crowded with lines that have passed into daily use. The *Essay on Criticism* is equally full of critical precepts put with exquisite skill. The *Satires* and *Epistles* are didactic, but their excellence is in the terse and finished types of character, in the almost creative drawing of which Pope remains unrivalled, even by Dryden. His translation of Homer resembles Homer as much as London resembled Troy, or Marlborough Achilles, or Queen Anne Hecuba. It is done with great literary art, but for that very reason it does not make us feel the simplicity and directness of his original. It has neither the manner nor the spirit of the Greek, just as Pope's descriptions of nature have neither the manner nor the spirit of nature. The *heroic couplet*, in which he wrote nearly all his work, he used with a correctness that has never been surpassed, but its smooth perfection, at length, wearies the ear. It wants the breaks that passion and imagination naturally make. Finally, he had the

spirit of an artist, hating those who degraded his art, and at a time when men followed it for money, and place, and the applause of the club and of the town, he loved it faithfully to the end, for its own sake.

119. **The Minor Poets** who surrounded Pope in the first two-thirds of his life did not approach his genius. Richard Blackmore endeavoured to restore the epic in his *Prince Arthur*, 1695, and Samuel Garth's mock heroic poem of the *Dispensary* appeared along with John Pomfret's poems in 1699. In 1701, Defoe's *Trueborn Englishman* defended William III. against those who said he was a foreigner, and Prior's finest ode, the *Carmen Seculare*, took up the same cause. John Philips is known by his Miltonic burlesque of *The Splendid Shilling*, and his *Cyder* was a Georgic of the apple. Matthew Green's *Spleen* and Ambrose Philip's *Pastorals* were contemporary with Pope's first poetry; and John Gay's *Shepherd's Week*, six pastorals, 1714, were as lightly wrought as his famous *Fables*. He had a true vein of happy song, and *Black-eyed Susan* remains with the *Beggars' Opera* to please us still. The political poems of Swift were coarse, but always hit home. Addison celebrated the Battle of Blenheim in the *Campaign*, and his cultivated grace is found in some devotional pieces. On his death Thomas Tickell made a noble elegy. Prior's charming ease is best shown in the light narrative poetry which we may say began with him in the reign of William III. In Pope's later life a new and quickening impulse came upon poetry, and changed it root and branch. It arose in Ramsay's

Gentle Shepherd, 1725, and in Thomson's *Seasons*, 1730, and it rang the knell of the manner and the spirit of the critical school.

120. **The Prose Literature** of Pope's time collects itself round four great names, Swift, Defoe, Addison, and Bishop Berkeley, and they all exhibit those elements of the age of which I have spoken. JONATHAN SWIFT was the keenest of political partisans, for his fierce and earnest personality made everything he did impassioned. But he was far more than a partisan. He was the most original prose writer of his time — the man of genius among many men of talent. It was not till he was thirty years old, 1697, that he wrote the *Battle of the Books*, concerning the so-called *Letters of Phalaris*, and the *Tale of a Tub*, a satire on the Dissenters, the Papists, and even the Church of England. These books, published in 1704, made his reputation. He soon became the finest and most copious writer of pamphlets England had ever known. At first he supported the Whigs, but left them for the new Tory party in 1710, and his tracts brought him court favour, while his literary fame was increased by many witty letters, poems, and arguments. On the fall of the Tory party at the accession of George I., 1714, he retired to the Deanery of St. Patrick in Ireland, an embittered man, and the *Drapier's Letters*, 1724, written against Wood's halfpence, gained him popularity in a country that he hated. In 1726 his inventive genius, his savage satire, and his cruel indignation with life were all shown in *Gulliver's Travels*. The voyage to Lilliput

and Brobdingnag satirised the politics and manners of England and Europe; that to Laputa mocked the philosophers; and the last, to the country of the Houyhnhnms, lacerated and defiled the whole body of humanity. No English is more robust than Swift's, no life in private and public more sad and proud, no death more pitiable. He died in 1745 hopelessly insane. DANIEL DEFOE'S vein as a pamphleteer seems to have been inexhaustible, and the style of his tracts was as roughly persuasive as it was popular. Above all he was the journalist. His *Review*, published twice a week for a year, was wholly written by himself; but he "founded, conducted, and wrote for a host of other newspapers," and filled them with every subject of the day. His tales grew out of matters treated of in his journals, and his best art lay in the way he built up these stories out of mere suggestions. "The little art he is truly master of," said one of his contemporaries, "is of forging a story and imposing it on the world for truth." His circumstantial invention, combined with a style which exactly fits it by its simplicity, is the root of the charm of the great story by which he chiefly lives in literature. *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719, equalled *Gulliver's Travels* in truthful representation, and excelled them in invention. The story lives and charms from day to day. But none of his stories are real novels; that is, they have no plot to the working out of which the characters and the events contribute. They form the transition, however, from the slight tale and the romance of the Elizabethan time to the finished novel of Richardson and Fielding.

121. **Metaphysical Literature**, which drifted into theology, was enriched by the work of BISHOP BERKELEY. The Platonic dialogue of *Hylas and Philonous*, 1713, charms us even more than his subtle and elastic *Siris*, 1744. These books, with *Alciphron, the Minute Philosopher*, 1732, questioned the real existence of matter, — "no idea can exist," he said, "out of the mind," — and founded on the denial of it an answer to the English Deists, round whom in the first half of the eighteenth century centred the struggle between the claims of natural and revealed religion. The influence of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, 1711, was far more literary than metaphysical. He condemned metaphysics, but his philosophy, such as it was, inspired Pope, and his cultivated thinking on several subjects made many writers in the next generation care for beauty and grace. He, like Bolingbroke, and Wollaston, Tindal, Toland, and Collins, on the Deists' side, were opposed by Samuel Clark, by Bentley, by Bishop Butler, and by Bishop Warburton. BISHOP BUTLER'S acute and solid reasoning treated in his *Sermons* the subject of Morals, inquiring what was the particular nature of man, and hence determining the course of life correspondent to this nature. His *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, 1736, endeavours to make peace between authority and reason, and has become a standard book. I may mention here a social satire, *The Fable of the Bees*, by Mandeville, half-poem, half-prose dialogue, and finished in 1729. It tried to prove that the vices

of society are the foundation of civilisation, and is one of the first of a new set of books which marked the rise in England of the bold speculations on the nature and ground of society to which the French Revolution gave afterwards so great an impulse.

122. **The Periodical Essay** is connected with the names of JOSEPH ADDISON and SIR RICHARD STEELE. The gay, light, graceful, literary Essay, differing from such Essays as Bacon's as good conversation about a subject differs from a clear analysis of all its points, was begun in France by Montaigne in 1580. Charles Cotton, a wit of Charles II.'s time, retranslated Montaigne's *Essays*, and they soon found imitators in Cowley and Sir W. Temple. But the periodical Essay was created by Steele and Addison. It was at first published three times a week, then daily, and it was anonymous, and both these characters necessarily changed its form from that of an essay by Montaigne. Steele began it in the *Tatler*, 1709, and it treated of everything that was going on in the town. He paints as a social humourist the whole age of Queen Anne — the political and literary disputes, the fine gentlemen and ladies, the characters of men, the humours of society, the new book, the new play; we live in the very streets and drawing-rooms of old London. Addison soon joined him, first in the *Tatler*, afterwards in the *Spectator*, 1711. His work is more critical, literary, and didactic than his companion's. The characters he introduces, such as Sir Roger de Coverley, are finished studies after nature. The humour is very

fine and tender; and, like Chaucer's, it is never bitter. The style adds to the charm: in its varied cadence and subtle ease it has not been surpassed within its own peculiar sphere in England; and it seems to grow out of the subjects treated of. Addison's work was a great one, lightly done. The *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, and the *Freeholder*, in his hands, gave a better tone to manners, and hence to morals, and a gentler one to political and literary criticism. The essays published every Friday were chiefly on literary subjects, the Saturday essays chiefly on religious subjects. The former popularised literature, so that culture spread among the middle classes and crept down to the country; the latter popularised religion. "I have brought," he says, "philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

THE DRAMA, FROM THE RESTORATION TO 1780

123. **The Drama** after the Restoration took the tone of the court both in politics and religion, but its partisanship decayed under William III., and died in the reign of Queen Anne. The court of Charles II., which the plays now written represented much more than they did the national life, gave the drama the "genteel" ease and the immorality of its society, and encouraged it to find new impulses from the tragedy and comedy of Spain and of France. The French romances of the school of Calprenède and Scudéry furnished plots to the playwriters. The great French dramatists, Corneille,

Racine, and Molière, were translated and borrowed from again and again. The "three unities" of Corneille, and rhyme instead of blank verse as the vehicle of tragedy, were adopted, but "the spirit of neither the serious nor the comic drama of France could then be transplanted into England."

Two acting companies were formed on Charles II.'s return, under Thomas Killigrew and Davenant; actresses came on the stage for the first time, the ballet was introduced, and scenery began to be largely used. Dryden, whose masterly force was sure to strike the key-note that others followed, began his comedies in 1663, but turned to tragedy in the *Indian Queen*, 1664. This play, with the *Indian Emperour*, established for fourteen years the rhymed couplet as the dramatic verse. His defence of rhyme in the *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* asserted the originality of the English school, and denied that it followed the French. *The Maiden Queen*, 1667, brought him new fame, and then *Tyrannic Love* and the *Conquest of Granada*, 1672, induced the burlesque of the *Rehearsal*, written by the Duke of Buckingham, in which the bombastic extravagance of these heroic plays was ridiculed. Dryden now changed, in 1678, his dramatic manner, and following Shakespeare, "disencumbered himself from rhyme" in his fine tragedy of *All for Love*, and showed what power he had of low comedy in the *Spanish Friar*. After the Revolution, his tragedy of *Don Sebastian* ranks high, but not higher than his brilliantly written comedy of *Amphitryon*, 1690. Dryden is

the representative dramatist of the Restoration. Among the tragedians who followed his method and possessed their own, those most worthy of notice are Nat Lee, whose *Rival Queens*, 1667, deserves its praise; Thomas Otway, whose two pathetic tragedies, the *Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*, still keep the stage; Thomas Southerne whose *Fatal Marriage*, 1694, was revived by Garrick; and Congreve who once turned from comedy to write *The Mourning Bride*.

It was in comedy, however, that the dramatists excelled. Sir George Etherege originated with great skill the new comedy of England with *She Would if She Could*, 1668. Sedley, Mrs. Behn, Lacy, and Shadwell carry on to the Revolution that light Comedy of Manners which William Wycherley's gross vigour and natural plots lifted into an odious excellence in such plays as the *Country Wife* and the *Plain Dealer*. Three great comedians followed Wycherley — William Congreve, whose well-bred ease is almost as remarkable as his brilliant wit; Sir John Vanbrugh, and George Farquhar, both of whom have quick invention, gaiety, dash, and sincerity. The indecency of all these writers belongs to the time, but it is partly forgotten in their swift and sustained vivacity. This immorality produced Jeremy Collier's famous attack on the stage, 1698; and the growth of a higher tone in society, uniting with this attack, began to purify the drama, though Mrs. Centlivre's comedies, during the reign of Queen Anne, show no love of purity. Steele, at this time, whose *Lying Lover* makes him the

father of Sentimental comedy, wrote all his plays with a moral purpose. Nicholas Rowe, whose melancholy tragedies "are occupied with themes of heroic love," is dull, but never gross; while Addison's ponderous tragedy of *Cato*, 1713, praised by Voltaire as the first *tragédie raisonnable*, marks, in its total rejection of the drama of nature for the classical style, "a definite epoch in the history of English tragedy, an epoch of decay, on which no recovery has followed." Comedy, however, had still a future. The *Beggars' Opera* of Gay, 1728, revived an old form of drama in a new way. Colley Cibber carried on into George II.'s time the light and the sentimental comedy; Fielding made the stage the vehicle of criticism on the follies, literature, and politics of his time; and Foote and Garrick did the same kind of work in their farces.

The influence of the Restoration drama continues, past this period, in the manner of Goldsmith and Sheridan who wrote between 1768 and 1778; but the lambent humour of Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, and the wit, almost as brilliant and more epigrammatic than Congreve's, of Sheridan's *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal*, are not deformed by the indecency of the Restoration. Both were Irishmen, but Goldsmith has more of the Celtic grace and Sheridan of the Celtic wit. The sentimental comedy was carried on into the next age by Macklin, Murphy, Cumberland, the Colmans, and many others, but we may say that with Sheridan the history of the elder English Drama closes. That which belongs to our century is a different thing.

CHAPTER VII

PROSE LITERATURE FROM THE DEATH OF POPE AND OF SWIFT TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO THE DEATH OF SCOTT

1745–1789–1832

124. **Prose Literature.** — The rapid increase of manufactures, science, and prosperity which began with the middle of the eighteenth century is paralleled by the growth of Literature. The general causes of this growth were —

1st, That *a good prose style had been perfected*, and the method of writing being made easy, production increased. Men were born, as it were, into a good school of the art of composition.

2ndly, The *long peace* after the accession of the House of Hanover had left England at rest, and given it wealth. The reclaiming of waste tracts, the increased population and trade, made better communication necessary; and the country was soon covered with a network of highways. The leisure gave time to men to think and write; the quicker interchange between the capital and the country spread over England the literature of the capital, and stirred men everywhere to express their

thoughts. The coaching services and the post carried the new book and the literary criticism to the villages, and awoke the men of talent there, who might otherwise have been silent.

3rdly, *The Press* sent far and wide the news of the day, and grew in importance till it contained the opinions and writings of men like Johnson. Such seed produced literary work in the country. *Newspapers* now began to play a larger part in literature. They rose under the Commonwealth, but became important when the censorship which reduced them to a mere broadsheet of news was removed after the Revolution of 1688. The political sleep of the age of the two first Georges hindered their progress; but in the reign of George III., after a struggle with which the name of John Wilkes and the author of the *Letters of Junius* are connected, and which lasted from 1764 to 1771, the press claimed and obtained the right to criticise the conduct and measures of ministers and the king; and the further right to publish and comment on the debates in the two Houses.

4thly, *Communication with the Continent* had increased during the peaceable times of Walpole, and the wars that followed made it still more common. With its increase two new and great outbursts of literature told upon England. France sent the works of Montesquieu, of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, and the rest of the liberal thinkers who were called the Encyclopædists, to influence and quicken English literature on all the great subjects that belong

to the social and political life of man. Afterwards, the fresh German movement, led by Lessing and others, and carried on by Goethe and Schiller, added its impulse to the poetical school that arose in England along with the French Revolution. These were the general causes of the rapid growth of literature from the time of the death of Swift and of Pope.

125. **Prose Literature between 1745 and the French Revolution** may be said to be bound up with the literary lives of one man and his friends. SAMUEL JOHNSON, born in 1709, and whose first important prose work, the *Life of Savage*, appeared in 1744, was the last representative of the literary king, who, like Dryden and Pope, held a court in London. Poor and unknown, he worked his way to fame, and his first poem, the *London*, 1738, satirised the town where he loved to live. His longer and better poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, was published in 1749, and his moral power was never better shown than in its weighty verse. His one play, *Irene*, was acted in the same year. He carried on the periodical essays in the *Rambler*, 1750–2, but in it, as afterwards in the *Idler*, grace and lightness, the essence of this kind of essay, were lost. Driven by poverty, Johnson undertook a greater work: the *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755, and his celebrated letter to Lord Chesterfield, concerning its publication, gave the death-blow to patronage, and makes Johnson the first of the modern literary men who, independent of patrons, live by their pen and find

in the public their only paymaster. He represents thus a new class. In 1759 he set on foot the Didactic Novel in *Rasselas*. For a time he was one of the political pamphleteers, from 1770 to 1776. As he drew near to his death his *Lives of the Poets* appeared as prefaces to his edition of the poets in 1781, and lifted biography into a higher place in literature. But he did even more for literature as a converser, as the chief talker of a literary club, than by writing, and we know exactly what a power he was by the vivid *Biography*, the best in our language, which James Boswell, with fussy devotedness, made of his master in 1791. Side by side with Johnson stands OLIVER GOLDSMITH, whose graceful and pure English is a pleasant contrast to the loaded Latinism of Johnson's style. The *Vicar of Wakefield*, the *History of Animated Nature*, are at one in charm, and the latter is full of that love of natural scenery, the sentiment of which is absent from Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles*. Both these men were masters of Miscellaneous Literature, and in that class, I mention here, as belonging to the latter half of the eighteenth century, EDMUND BURKE'S *Vindication of Natural Society*, a parody of Bolingbroke; and his *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, a book which in 1757 introduced him to Johnson. Nor ought we to forget Sir Joshua Reynolds, another of Johnson's friends, who first made English art literary in his *Discourses on Painting;* nor Horace Walpole, whose *Anecdotes of Painting*, 1762–71, still please;

and whose familiar *Letters*, malicious, light as froth, but amusing, retail with liveliness all the gossip of the time. Among all these books on the intellectual subjects of life arose to delight the lovers of quiet and the country the *Natural History of Selborne*, by Gilbert White. His seeing eye and gentle heart are imaged in his fresh and happy style.

126. **The Novel.** — "There is more knowledge of the heart," said Johnson, "in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*," and the saying introduces SAMUEL RICHARDSON and HENRY FIELDING, the makers of the modern novel. Wholly distinct from merely narrative stories like Defoe's, the true novel is a story wrought round the passion of love to a tragic or joyous conclusion. But the name is applied now to any story of human life which is woven by the action of characters or of events on characters to a chosen conclusion. Its form, far more flexible than that of the drama, admits of almost infinite development. The whole of human life, at any time, at any place in the world, is its subject, and its vast sphere accounts for its vast production. *Pamela*, 1741, appeared while Pope was yet alive, and was the first of Richardson's novels. Like *Clarissa Harlowe*, 1748, it was written in the form of letters. The third of these books was *Sir Charles Grandison*. They are novels of Sentiment, and their purposeful morality and religion mark the change which had taken place in the morals and faith of literature since the preceding age.

Clarissa Harlowe is a masterpiece in its kind. Rich-

ardson himself is mastered day by day by the passionate creation of his characters: and their variety and the variety of their feelings are drawn with a slow, diffusive, elaborate intensity which penetrates into the subtlest windings of the human heart. But all the characters are grouped round and enlighten Clarissa, the pure and ideal star of womanhood. The pathos of the book, its sincerity, its minute reality, have always, but slowly, impassioned its readers, and it stirred as absorbing an interest in France as it did in England. "Take care," said Diderot, "not to open these enchanting books, if you have any duties to fulfil." HENRY FIELDING followed Pamela with *Joseph Andrews*, 1742, and Clarissa with *Tom Jones*, 1749. At the same time, in 1748, appeared TOBIAS SMOLLETT's first novel, *Roderick Random*. Both wrote many other stories, but in the natural growth and development of the story, and in the infitting of the characters and events towards the conclusion, Tom Jones is said to be the English model of the novel. The constructive power of Fielding is absent from Smollett, but in inventive tale-telling and in cynical characterisation, he is not easily equalled. Fielding, a master of observing and of recording what he observed, draws English life both in town and country with a coarse and realistic pencil: Smollett is led beyond the truth of nature into caricature. Ten years had thus sufficed to create a wholly new literature.

LAURENCE STERNE published the first part of *Tristram Shandy* in the same year as *Rasselas*, 1759. *Tristram*

Shandy and the *Sentimental Journey* are scarcely novels. They have no plot, they can scarcely be said to have any story. The story of *Tristram Shandy* wanders like a man in a labyrinth, and the humour is as labyrinthine as the story. It is carefully invented, and whimsically subtle; and the sentiment is sometimes true, but mostly affected. But a certain unity is given to the book by the admirable consistency of the characters. A little later, in 1766, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* was the first and, perhaps, the most charming, of all those novels which we may call idyllic, which describe in a pure and gentle style the simple loves and lives of country people. Lastly, but still in the same circle of Johnson's friends, Miss Burney's *Evelina*, 1778, and her *Cecilia*, in which we detect Johnson's Roman hand, were the first novels of society.

127. **History** shared in the progress made after 1745 in prose writing, and was raised into the rank of literature by three of Johnson's contemporaries. All of them were influenced by the French school, by Montesquieu and Voltaire. DAVID HUME'S *History of England*, finished in 1761, is, in the writer's endeavour to make it a philosophic whole, in its clearness of narrative and purity of style, our first literary history. But he is neither exact, nor does he care to be exact. He does not love his subject, and he wants sympathy with mankind and with his country. His manner is the manner of Voltaire, passionless, keen, and elegant. DR. ROBERTSON, Hume's friend, was a careful and serious but also a cold writer. His histories of Scotland, of Charles V., and of America

show how historical interest again began to reach beyond England. EDWARD GIBBON, whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, completed in 1788, gave a new impulse and a new model to historical literature, had no more sympathy with humanity than Hume, and his irony lowers throughout the human value of his history. But he had creative power, originality, and the enjoyment and imagination of his subject. It was at Rome in 1764, while musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, that the idea of writing his book arose in his mind, and his conception of the work was that of an artist. Rome, eastern and western, was painted in the centre of the world, dying slowly like a lion in his cave. Around it and towards it he drew all the nations and hordes and faiths that wrought its ruin; told their stories from the beginning, and the results on themselves and on the world of their victories over Rome. This imaginative conception, together with the collecting and use of every detail of the arts, literature, customs, and manners of the times he described, the reading and use of all the contemporary literature, the careful geographical detail, the marshalling of all this information into his narration and towards his conclusion, the power with which he moved over this vast arena, and the use of a full if too grandiose a style to give importance to his subject, makes him the one historian of the eighteenth century whom modern research recognises as its master.

128. **Philosophical and Political Literature.** — Hutcheson, Hartley, and Reid were inferior as philosophers to DAVID HUME, who inquired, while he followed Locke,

into the nature of the human understanding, and based philosophy upon psychology. He constructed a science of man; and finally limited all our knowledge to the world of phenomena revealed to us by experience. In morals he made utility the only measure of virtue. The first of his books, the *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739, was written in France, and was followed by the *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* in 1751. The *Dialogues on Natural Religion* were not published till after his death. These were his chief philosophical works. But in 1741–2, he had published two volumes of *Essays Moral and Political*, from which we might infer a political philosophy; and in 1752 the *Political Discourses* appeared, and they have been fairly said to be the cradle of political economy. But that subject was afterwards taken up by ADAM SMITH, a friend of Hume's, whose book on the *Moral Sentiments*, 1759, classes him also with the philosophers of Scotland. In his *Wealth of Nations*, 1776, by its theory that labour is the source of wealth, and that to give the labourer absolute freedom to pursue his own interest in his own way is the best means of increasing the wealth of the country; by its proof that all laws made to restrain, or to shape, or to promote commerce, were stumbling-blocks in the way of the wealth of a state, he created the Science of Political Economy, and brought the theory of Free Trade into practice. All the questions of labour and capital were now placed on a scientific basis, and since that time the literature of the whole of the subject has engaged great thinkers. As the

immense increase of the industry, wealth, and commerce of the country from 1720 to 1770 had thus stirred inquiry into the laws which regulate wealth, so now the Methodist movement, beginning in 1738, awoke an interest in the poor, and gave the first impulse to popular education. Social Reform became a literary subject, and fills a large space until 1832, when political reform brought forward new subjects, and the old subjects under new forms. This new philanthropy was stirred into further growth by the theories of the French Revolution, and these theories, taking violent effect in France, roused into opposition the genius of Edmund Burke. Unlike Hume, whose politics were elaborated in the study, Burke wrote his political tracts and speeches face to face with events and upon them. Philosophical reasoning and poetic passion were wedded together in them on the side of Conservatism, and every art of eloquence was used with the mastery that imagination gives. In 1766 he defended Lord Rockingham's administration; he was then wrongly suspected of the authorship of the *Letters of Junius*, political invectives (1769–72), whose trenchant style has preserved them to this day. Burke's *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770, maintained an aristocratic government; and the next year appeared his famous *Speech on American Taxation*, while that on *American Conciliation*, 1774, was answered by his friend Johnson in *Taxation no Tyranny*. The most powerful of his works were the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, and the *Letters*

on a Regicide Peace, 1796–7. The first of these, answered by Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, and by James Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, spread over all England a terror of the principles of the Revolution; the third doubled the eagerness of England to carry on the war with France. As a writer he needed more temperance, but, if he had possessed it, we should probably have not had his magnificence. As an orator he ended by wearying his hearers, but the very men who slept under him in the House read over and over again the same speech when published with renewed delight. Goldsmith's praise of him — that he "wound himself into his subject like a serpent" — gives the reason why he sometimes failed as an orator, why he generally succeeded as a writer.

129. **Prose from 1789–1832. Miscellaneous.**—The death of Johnson marks a true period in our later prose literature. London had ceased then to be the only literary centre. Books were produced in all parts of the country, and Edinburgh had its own famous school of literature. The doctrines of the French Revolution were eagerly supported and eagerly opposed, and stirred like leaven through a great part of the literary work of England. Later on, through Coleridge, Scott, Carlyle, and others, the influence of Lessing, Goethe, of all the new literature of Germany, began to tell upon us, in theology, in philosophy, and even in the novel. The great English Journals, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Herald*, were all set on foot between

1775 and 1793, between the war with America and the war with France; and when men like Coleridge and Canning began to write in them the literature of journalism was started. A literature especially directed towards education arose in the *Cyclopædias*, which began in 1778, and rapidly developed into vast dictionaries of knowledge. Along with them were the many series issued from Edinburgh and London of *Popular Miscellanies*. A crowd of literary men found employment in writing about books rather than in writing them, and the literature of Criticism became a power. The *Edinburgh Review* was established in 1802, and the *Quarterly*, its political opponent, in 1809, and these were soon followed by *Fraser's* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. Jeffrey, Professor Wilson, Sydney Smith, and a host of others wrote in these reviews on contemporary events and books. Interest in contemporary stimulated interest in past literature, and Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Thomas Campbell, Hazlitt, Southey, and Savage Landor carried on that study of the Elizabethan and earlier poets to which Warton had given so much impulse in the eighteenth century. Literary quarrels concerning the nature of poetry produced books like Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria;* and Wordsworth's Essays on his own art are in admirable prose. DE QUINCEY, one of the Edinburgh School, is, owing to the over-lapping and involved melody of his style, one of our best, as he is one of our most various miscellaneous writers: and with him for masculine English, for various learning and forcible fancy, and, not least, for his vigor-

ous lyrical work and poems, we may rank WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, who deepened an interest in English and classic literature and made a literature of his own. CHARLES LAMB'S inimitable fineness of perception was shown in his criticisms on the old dramatists, but his most original work was the *Essays of Elia*, in which he renewed the lost grace of the Essay, and with a humour not less gentle, more surprising, more self-pleased than Addison's.

130. **Theological Literature** had received a new impulse in 1738–91 from the evangelising work of John Wesley and Whitfield; and their spiritual followers, Thomas Scott, Newton, and Cecil, made by their writings the Evangelical School. William Paley, in his *Evidences*, defended Christianity from the common-sense point of view; while the sermons of Robert Hall and of Dr. Chalmers are, in different ways, fine examples of devotional and philosophical eloquence.

131. The eloquent intelligence of Edinburgh continued the **Literature of Philosophy** in the work of Dugald Stewart, Reid's successor, and in that of Dr. Browne, who for the most part opposed Hume's fundamental idea that Psychology is a part of the science of life. Coleridge brought his own and German philosophy into the treatment of theological questions in the *Aids to Reflection*, and into various subjects of life in the *Friend*. The utilitarian view of morals was put forth by Jeremy Bentham with great power, but his chief work was in the province of law. He founded the philosophy of juris-

prudence, he invented a scientific legal vocabulary, and we owe to him almost every reform that has improved our law. He wrote also on political economy, but that subject was more fully developed by Malthus, Ricardo, and James Mill.

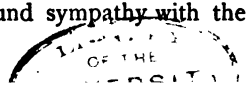
132. **Biography** and **travel** are linked at many points to history, and the literature of the former was enriched by Hayley's *Cowper*, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, McCrie's *Life of Knox*, Moore's *Life of Byron*, and Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. As to travel, it has rarely produced books which may be called literature, but the works of biographers and travellers have brought together the materials of literature. Bruce left for Africa in 1762, and in the next seventy years Africa, Egypt, Italy, Greece, the Holy Land, and the Arctic Regions were made the common property of literary men.

133. **The Historical School** produced Mitford's *History of Greece* and Lingard's *History of England;* but it was Henry Hallam who for the first time wrote history in this country without prejudice. His *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 1818, is distinguished by its exhaustive and judicial summing-up of facts, and his *Constitutional History of England* opened a new vein of history in the best way. Since his time, history has become more and more worthy of the name of fine literature, and the critical schools of our own day, while making truth the first thing, and the philosophy of history the second, do not disdain but exact the graces of literature. But of all the forms of prose literature, the novel was the most largely used and developed.

134. **The Novel.** — The stir of thought made by the French Revolution had many side influences on novel-writing. The political stories of Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin disclosed a new realm to the novelist. The *Canterbury Tales* of Sophia and Harriet Lee, and the wild and picturesque tales of Mrs. Radcliffe introduced the romantic novel. Mrs. Inchbald's *Simple Story*, 1791, started the novel of passion, whilst Mrs. Opie made domestic life the sphere of her graceful and pathetic stories, 1806. Miss Edgeworth in her Irish stories gave the first impulse to the novel of national character, and in her other tales to the novel with a moral purpose, 1800–47. Miss Austen, "with an exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from truth of description and sentiment," produced the best novels we have of everyday society, 1811–17. With the peace of 1815 arose new forms of fiction; and travel, now popular, gave birth to the tale of foreign society and manners; of these, Thomas Hope's *Anastasius* (1819) was the first. The classical novel arose in Lockhart's *Valerius*, and Miss Ferrier's humorous tales of Scottish life were pleasant to Walter Scott.

It was WALTER SCOTT, however, who raised the whole of the literature of the novel into one of the great influences that bear on human life. Men are still alive who remember the wonder and delight with which *Waverley* (1814) was welcomed. The swiftness of work combined with vast diligence which belongs to very great

genius belonged to him. *Guy Mannering* was written in six weeks, and the *Bride of Lammermoor*, as great in fateful pathos as *Romeo and Juliet*, but more solemn, was done in a fortnight. There is then a certain *abandon* in his work which removes it from the dignity of the ancient writers, but we are repaid for this loss by the intensity, and the animated movement, the clear daylight, and the inspired delight in and with which he invented and wrote his stories. It is not composition; it is Scott actually present in each of his personages, doing their deeds and speaking their thoughts. His national tales — and his own country was his best inspiration — are written with such love for the characters and the scenes, that we feel his living joy and love underneath each of the stories as a completing charm, as a spirit that enchants the whole. And in these tales and in his poems his own deep kindliness, his sympathy with human nature, united, after years of enmity, the Highlands to the Lowlands. In the vivid portraiture and dramatic reality of such tales as *Old Mortality* and *Quentin Durward* he created the historical novel. "All is great," said Goethe, speaking of one of these historical tales, "in the Waverley Novels; material, effect, characters, execution." In truth, so natural is Scott's invention, that it seems creation — even the landscape is woven through the events and in harmony with them. His comprehensive power, which drew with the same certainty so many characters in so many various classes, was the direct result of his profound sympathy with the simpler feelings



of the human heart, and of his pleasure in writing so as to make human life more beautiful and more good in the eyes of men. He was always romantic, and his personal romance did not fail him when he came to be old. Like Shakespeare he kept that to the very close. The later years of his life were dark, but the almost unrivalled nobleness of his battle against ill fortune proves that he was as great-hearted as he was great. "God bless thee, Walter, my man," said his uncle, "thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good." His last long tale of power was the *Fair Maid of Perth*, 1828, and his last effort, in 1831, was made the year before he died. That year, 1832, which saw the deaths of Goethe and Scott, is the close of an epoch in literature.

CHAPTER VIII

POETRY FROM 1730 TO 1832

135. **The Elements and Forms of the New Poetry.** — The poetry we are now to study may be divided into two periods. The first dates from about the middle of Pope's life, and closes with the publication of Cowper's *Task*, 1785; the second begins with the *Task* and closes in 1832. The first is not wrongly called a time of transition. The influence of the poetry of the past lasted; new elements were added to poetry, and new forms of it took shape. There was a change also in the style and in the subject of poetry. Under these heads I shall bring together the various poetical works of this period.

(1) The influence of the didactic and satirical poetry of the critical school lingered among the new elements which first modified and then changed poetry altogether. It is found in Johnson's two satires on the manners of his time, the *London*, 1738, and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1749; in Robert Blair's dull poem of *The Grave*, 1743; in Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, 1743, a poem on the immortality of the soul, and in his satires on *The Universal Passion* of fame; in the tame work of

Richard Savage, Johnson's poor friend; and in the short-lived but vigorous satires of Charles Churchill, who died in 1764, twenty-one years after Savage. The *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 1744, by Mark Akenside, belongs also in spirit to the time of Queen Anne, and was suggested by Addison's essays in the *Spectator* on Imagination.

(2) The study of the Greek and Latin classics revived, and with it a more artistic poetry. Men like Thomas Gray and William Collins attempted to "revive the just designs of Greece," not only in fitness of language, but in perfection of form. They are commonly placed together, but the genius of each was essentially different. What they had in common belonged to the age in which they lived, and one of these elements was a certain artificial phrasing from which they found it difficult to escape. Both sought beauty more than their fellows, but Collins found it more than Gray. He had the greater grace and the sweeter simplicity, and his *Ode to Simplicity* tells us the direction in which poetry was going. His best work, like *The Ode to Evening*, is near to Keats, and recalls that poet's imaginative way. His inferior work is often rude and his style sometimes obscure, but when he is touched by joy in "ecstatic trial," or when he sits with Melancholy in love of peace and gentle musing, he is indeed inspired by truth and loveliness. He died too young to do much in a perfect way. Gray was different. All is clear light in his work. There is no gradual dusky veil such as Collins threw with so much

charm over his expression. Out of his love of Greek work he drew his fine lucidity. Out of the spirit of his own time and from his own cultivated experience he drew the moral criticism of human life which gives his poetry its weight, even its heaviness. It is true the moral criticism, even in the *Elegy*, shares in the commonplace, but it was not so commonplace in his time, and it is so full of a gentle charity that it transcends his time. He moved with easy power over many forms of poetry, but there is naturalness and no rudeness in the power. It was adorned by high ornament and finish. The *Odes* are far beyond their age, especially *The Progress of Poesy*, and each kind has its own appropriate manner. The *Elegy* will always remain one of the beloved poems of Englishmen. It is not only a piece of exquisite work; it is steeped in England. It is contemplative and might have been cold. On the contrary, even when it is conventional, it has a certain passion in its contemplation which is one of the marks of the work of Gray. Had he had more imagination he would have been greater, but the spirit of his age repressed nature in him. But he stands clear and bright, along with his brother, on the ridge between the old and the new. Having ascended through the old poetry, he saw the new landscape of song below him, felt its fresher air, and sent his own power into the men who arose after him.

(3) The study of the Elizabethan and the earlier poets like Chaucer, and of the whole course of poetry in England, was taken up with great interest. Shakespeare

and Chaucer had engaged both Dryden and Pope; but the whole subject was now enlarged. Gray, like Pope, projected a history of English poetry, and his *Ode on the Progress of Poesy* illustrates this new interest. Thomas Warton wrote his *History of English Poetry*, 1774–81, and brought the lovers of poetry into closer contact with Chaucer. Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, and Warburton's editions of Shakespeare were succeeded by Johnson's in 1765; and Garrick began the restoration of the genuine text of Shakespeare's plays for the stage. Spenser formed the spirit and work of some poets, and Thomas Warton wrote an essay on the *Faerie Queene*. William Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, 1742, was one of these Spenserian poems, and so was Thomson's delightful *Castle of Indolence*, 1748. James Beattie, in the *Minstrel*, 1771, also followed the stanza and manner of Spenser.

(4) A new element — interest in the romantic past — was aided by the publication of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765. The narrative ballad and the narrative romance, afterwards taken up and perfected by Sir Walter Scott, had already begun to strike their roots afresh in English poetry. *The Braes of Yarrow* and Mallet's *William and Margaret* were written before 1725. Men now began to seek among the ruder times of history for wild, natural stories of human life; and the pleasure in these increased and accompanied the growing love of lonely, even of savage scenery. Even before the *Reliques* were published, Gray's power of

seeing into the right thing is seen in this matter. He entered the new paths, and in a new atmosphere, when he wrote of the Norse legends, or studied what he could learn of the poetry of Wales. The *Ossian*, 1762, of James Macpherson, which imposed itself on the public as a translation of Gaelic epic poems, is an example of this new element. Still more remarkable in this way were the poems of Thomas Chatterton,

"That sleepless soul who perished in his pride."

He pretended to have discovered, in a muniment room at Bristol, the *Death of Sir Charles Bawdin*, and other poems, by an imaginary monk named Thomas Rowley, 1768. Written with quaint spelling, and with a great deal of lyrical invention, they raised around them a great controversy. His early death, at seventeen, has, by the pity of it, lifted his lyric poetry, romantic as it is, into more repute than it deserves.

136. **Change of Style.** — We have seen how the natural style of the Elizabethan poets had passed into a style which erred against the simplicity of natural expression. In reaction from this the critical poets set aside natural feeling, and wrote according to intellectual rules of art. Their style lost life and fire; and losing these, lost art and gained artifice. Unwarmed by natural feeling, it became as unnatural a style, though in a different way, as that of the later Elizabethan poets. But out of the failure of nature without art, and of art without nature,

and cut of the happy union of both in scattered and particular examples, the way was now ready for a style in which the art should itself be nature, and it found its first absolute expression in a few of Cowper's lyrics. His style, in such poems as the *Lines to Mary Unwin*, and in *The Castaway*, arises out of the simplest pathos, and yet is almost as pure in expression as a Greek elegy. The work was then done; but the element of fervent passion did not enter into poetry till the poems of Robert Burns appeared in 1786.

137. **Change of Subject. Nature.** — The Poets have always worked on two great subjects — man and nature. Up to the age of Pope the subject of man was chiefly treated, and we have seen how many phases it went through. There remained the subject of nature and of man's relation to it; that is, of the visible landscape, sea, and sky, and all that men feel in contact with them. Natural scenery had been hitherto chiefly used as a background to the picture of human life. It now began to occupy a much larger space in poetry, and after a time grew to occupy a distinct place of its own apart from man. Much of this was owing to the opening out of the wild country by new roads and to the increased safety of travel. It is the growth of this new subject which will engage us now.

138. **The Poetry of Natural Description.** — We have already found in the poets, but chiefly among the lyrical poets, a pleasure in rural scenery and the emotions it awakened. But nature is only, as in the work of Shake-

speare, Marvell, Milton, Vaughan, or Herrick, incidentally introduced. The first poem devoted to natural description appeared while Pope was yet alive, in the very midst of the town poetry. It was the *Seasons*, 1726–30; and it is curious, remembering what I have said about the peculiar turn of the Scots for natural description, that it was the work of JAMES THOMSON, a Scotsman. It described the landscape and country life of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. He wrote with his eye upon their scenery, and even when he wrote of it in his room, it was with "a recollected love." The descriptions were too much like catalogues, the very fault of the previous Scottish poets, and his style was heavy and cold, but he was the first poet who deliberately led the English people into that separated world of natural description which has enchanted us in the work of modern poetry. The impulse he gave was soon followed. Men left the town to visit the country and record their feelings. John Dyer's *Grongar Hill*, 1726, a description of a journey in South Wales, and his *Fleece*, 1757, are full of country sights and scenes: and even Akenside mingled his spurious philosophy with pictures of the solitudes of nature.

Foreign travel now enlarged the love of nature. The wilder country of England was eagerly visited. Gray's letters, some of the best in the English language, describe the landscape of Yorkshire and Westmoreland with a minuteness quite new in English literature. In his poetry he used the description of nature as "its most

graceful ornament," but never made it the subject. It was interwoven with reflections on human life, and used to point its moral. Collins observes the same method in his *Ode on the Passions* and the *Ode to Evening*. There is as yet but little love of nature entirely for its own sake. A further step was made by Oliver Goldsmith in his *Traveller*, 1764, a sketch of national manners and governments, and in his *Deserted Village*, 1770. He describes natural scenery with less emotion than Collins, but does not moralise it like Gray. The scenes he paints are pure pictures, and he has no personal interest in them. The next step was made a few years later by some fourth-rate men like the two Wartons. Their poems do not speak of nature and human life, but of nature and themselves. They see the reflection of their own passions in the woods and streams, and this self-conscious pleasure with lonely nature grew slowly into a main subject of poetry. These were the steps towards that love of nature for its own sake which we shall find in the poets who followed Cowper. One poem of the time almost anticipates it. It is the *Minstrel*, 1771, of JAMES BEATTIE. This poem represents a young poet educated almost altogether by solitary communion with nature, and by love of her beauty; and both in the spirit and treatment of the first part of the story resembles very closely Wordsworth's description of his own education by nature in the beginning of the *Prelude*.

139. **Further Change of Subject. Man.** — During this time the interest in mankind, that is, in man inde-

pendent of nation, class, and caste, which we have seen in prose, began to influence poetry. One form of it appeared in the pleasure the poets began to take in men of other nations than England; another form of it — and this was increased by the Methodist revival — was a deep feeling for the lives of the poor. Thomson speaks with sympathy of the Siberian exile and the Mecca pilgrim, and the *Traveller* of Goldsmith enters into foreign questions. His *Deserted Village*, Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, Gray's *Elegy* celebrate the annals of the poor. Michael Bruce in his *Lochleven* praises the "secret primrose path of rural life," and Dr. John Langhorne in his *Country Justice* pleads the cause of the poor and paints their sorrows. Connected with this new element is the simple ballad of simple love, such as Shenstone's *Jemmy [redacted]son*, Mickle's *Mariner's Wife*, Goldsmith's *Edwin and Angelina*, poems which started afresh a delightful type of poetry, afterwards worked out more completely in the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth. In a class apart stands the *Song to David*, a long poem written by Christopher Sma[redacted]a friend of Johnson's. Its power of metre and imaginative presentation of thoughts and things, and its mingling of sweet and grand religious poetry ought to make it better known.

140. **Scottish Poetry** illustrates and anticipates the poetry of the poor and the ballad. We have not mentioned it since Sir David Lyndsay, for with the exception of stray songs its voice was almost silent for a century and a half. It revived in ALLAN RAMSAY, a friend of

Pope and Gay. His light pieces of rustic humour were followed by the *Tea Table Miscellany* and the *Ever-Green*, collections of existing Scottish songs mixed up with some of his own. Ramsay's pastoral drama of the *Gentle Shepherd*, 1725, is a pure, tender, and genuine picture of Scottish life and love among the poor and in the country. ROBERT FERGUSON deserves to be named because he kindled the muse of Burns, but his occasional pieces, 1773, are chiefly concerned with the rude and humorous life of Edinburgh. One man, Michael Bruce, illustrates the English transition of which I have spoken. The Ballad, Scotland's dear companion, took a more modern but pathetic form in some Yarrow poems, in *Auld Robin Gray* and the *Lament for Flodden*. The peculiarities I have dwelt on already continue in this Scottish revival. There is the same nationality, the same rough wit, the same love of nature, but the love of colour has lessened.

141. **The Second Period of the New Poetry.** — The new elements and the changes on which I have dwelt are expressed by three poets — Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns. But before these we must mention the poems of WILLIAM BLAKE, the artist, and for three reasons. (1) They represent the new elements. *The Poetical Sketches*, written in 1777, illustrate the new study of the Elizabethan poets. Blake imitated Spenser, and in his short fragment of *Edward III.* we hear again the note of Marlowe's violent imagination. A short poem *To the Muses* is a cry for the restoration to English poetry of the old poetic passion it had lost. In some ballad poems

we trace the influence represented by *Ossian* and quickened by the publication of Percy's *Reliques*. (2) We find also in his work certain elements which belong to the second period of which I shall soon speak. The love of animals is one. A great love of children and the poetry of home is another. He also anticipated in 1789 and 1794, when his *Songs of Innocence* and *Experience* were written, the simple natural poetry of ordinary life which Wordsworth perfected in the Lyrical Ballads, 1798. Moreover, the democratic element, the hatred of priestcraft, and the cry against social wrongs which came much later into English poetry spring up in his poetry. Then, he was a full Mystic, and through his mysticism appears that search after the true aims of life and after a freer theology which characterise our poetry after 1832. (3) He cast back as well as forward, and reproduced in his songs the spirit, movement, and music of the Elizabethan songs. The little poems in the *Songs of Innocence*, on infancy and first motherhood, and on subjects like the *Lamb*, are without rival in our language for simplicity, tenderness, and joy. The *Songs of Experience* give the reverse side of the *Songs of Innocence*, and they see the evil of the world as a child with a man's heart would see it — with exaggerated horror. This small but predictive work of Blake, coming where it did, between 1777 and 1794, going back to Elizabethan lyrics and forward to those of Wordsworth, is very remarkable.

142. **William Cowper's** first poems were some of the *Olney Hymns*, 1779, and in these the religious poetry of

Charles Wesley was continued. The profound personal religion, gloomy even to insanity as it often became, which fills the whole of Cowper's poetry, introduced a theological element into English poetry which continually increased till it died out with Browning and Tennyson. His didactic and satirical poems in 1782 link him backwards to the last age. His translation of Homer, 1791, and of shorter pieces from the Latin and Greek, connects him with the classical influence, his interest in Milton with the revived study of the English poets. The playful and gentle vein of humour which he showed in *John Gilpin* and other poems, opened a new kind of verse to poets. With this kind of humour is connected a simple pathos of which Cowper is a great master. The *Lines to Mary Unwin* and to his *Mother's Picture* prove, with the work of Blake, that pure natural feeling wholly free from artifice had returned to English song. A new element was also introduced by him and Blake — the love of animals and the poetry of their relation to man, a vein plentifully worked by after poets. His greatest work was the *Task*, 1785. It is mainly a description of himself and a life in the country, his home, his friends, his thoughts as he walked, the quiet landscape of Olney, the life of the poor people about him, mixed up with disquisitions on political and social subjects, and at the end, a prophecy of the victory of the Kingdom of God. The change in it in relation to the subject of nature is very great. Cowper loves nature entirely for her own sake. The change in relation to the subject of man is equally

great. The idea of mankind as a whole which we have seen growing up is fully formed in Cowper's mind. And though splendour and passion were added by the poets who succeeded him to the new poetry, yet they worked on the thoughts he had begun to express, and he is so far their forerunner.

143. **George Crabbe** took up the side of the poetry of man which had to do with the lives of the poor in the *Village*, 1783, and in the *Parish Register*, 1807. In the short tales related in these books we are brought face to face with the sacrifices, temptations, love, and crimes of humble life, and the effect of these poems in widening human sympathies was great among his readers. His work wanted the humour of Cowper, and though often pathetic and always forcible, was perhaps too unrelenting for pure pathos. He did much better work afterwards in his *Tales of the Hall*. His work on nature is as minute and accurate, but as limited in range of excellence, as his work on man. ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, himself a poor shoemaker, added to this poetry of the poor. The *Farmer's Boy*, finished in 1798, and the *Rural Tales*, are poems as cheerful as Crabbe's were stern, and his descriptions of rural life are not less faithful. The poetry of the poor, thus started, long continued in our verse. Wordsworth added to it new features, and Thomas Hood in short pieces like the *Song of the Shirt* gave it a direct bearing on social evils.

144. One element, the passionate treatment of love, had been on the whole absent from our poetry since the

Restoration. It was restored by **Robert Burns**. In his love songs we hear again, even more simply, more directly, the same natural music which in the age of Elizabeth enchanted the world. It was as a love-poet that he began to write, and the first edition of his poems appeared in 1786. But he was not only the poet of love, but also of the new excitement about mankind. Himself poor, he sang the poor. He did the same work in Scotland in 1786 which Crabbe began in England in 1783 and Cowper in 1785, and it is worth remarking how the dates run together. As in Cowper, so also in Burns, the further widening of human sympathies is shown in his tenderness for animals. He carried on also the Celtic elements of Scottish poetry, but the rattling fun of the *Jolly Beggars* and of *Tam o' Shanter* is united to a life-like painting of human character which is peculiarly English. A large gentleness of feeling often made his wit into that true humour which is more English than Celtic, and the passionate pathos of such poems as *Mary in Heaven* is connected with this vein of English humour. The special nationality of Scottish poetry is as strong in Burns as in any of his predecessors, but it is also mingled with a larger view of man than the merely national one. Nor did he fail to carry on the Scottish love of nature, though he shows the English influence in using natural description not for the love of nature alone, but as a background for human love. It was the strength of his passions and the weakness of his moral will which made his poetry and spoilt his life.

145. **The French Revolution and the Poets.** — Certain ideas relating to mankind considered as a whole had been growing up in Europe for some centuries, and we have seen their influence on the work of Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns. These ideas spoke of a return to nature, and of the best life being found in the country rather than in the town, so that the simple life of the poor and the scenery of the country were idealised into subjects for poetry. They spoke also of natural rights that belonged to every man, and which united all men to one another. All men were equal, and free, and brothers. There was therefore only one class, the class of man; only one nation, the nation of man, of which all were citizens. The divisions therefore which wealth and rank and caste and national boundaries had made were theoretically put aside as wrong. Such ideas had been growing into the political, moral, and religious life of men ever since the Renaissance, and they brought with them their own emotions. France, which does much of the formative work of Europe, had for some time past expressed them constantly in her literature. She now expressed them in the action which overthrew the Bastille in 1789 and proclaimed the new Constitution in the following year. They passed then from an abstract to a concrete form, and became active powers in the world, and it is round the excitement they kindled in England that the work of the poets from 1790 to 1832 can best be grouped. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey accepted them at first with joy, but receded from them

when they ended in the violence of the Reign of Terror, and in the imperialism of Napoleon. Scott turned from them with pain to write of the romantic past which they destroyed. Byron did not express them themselves, but he expressed the whole of the revolutionary spirit in its action against old social opinions. Shelley took them up after the reaction against them had begun to die away, and in half his poetry re-expressed them. Two men, Rogers and Keats, were wholly untouched by them. One special thing they did for poetry. They brought back, by the powerful feelings they kindled in men, passion into its style, into all its work about man, and through that, into its work about nature.

But, in giving the French Revolution its due weight, we must always remember that these ideas existed already in England and were expressed by the poets. The French outburst precipitated them, and started our new poetry with a rush and a surprise. But the enthusiasm soon suffered a chill, and a great part of our new poetry was impelled, not by the Revolution, but by the indignant revolt against what followed on it. Moreover, I have already shown that fully half of the new lines of thought and feeling on which the poetry of England ran in the nineteenth century had been laid down in the century which preceded it, and they were completed now.

146. **Robert Southey** began his political life with the revolutionary poem of *Wat Tyler*, 1794; and between 1801 and 1814 wrote *Thalaba*, *Madoc*, *The Curse of*

Kehama, and *Roderick the Last of the Goths*. *Thalaba* and *Kehama* are stories of Arabian and of Indian mythology. They are real poems, and have the interest of good narrative and the charm of musical metre, but the finer spirit of poetry is not in them. *Roderick* is the most human and the most poetical. His *Vision of Judgment*, written on the death of George III., and ridiculed by Byron in another *Vision*, proves him to have become a Tory of Tories. SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE could not turn round so completely, but the stormy enthusiasm of his early poems was lessened when in 1796 he wrote the *Ode on the Departing Year* and *France, an Ode*, 1798. His early poems are transitional, partly based on Gray, violent and obscure in style. But when he came to live with Wordsworth, he gained simplicity, and for a short time his poetic spirit was at the height of joy and production. But his early disappointment about France was bitter, and then, too, he injured his own life. The noble ode to *Dejection* is instinct not only with his own wasted life, but with the sorrow of one who has had golden ideals and found them turn in his hands to clay. His best work is but little, but unique of its kind. For exquisite metrical movement and for imaginative phantasy, there is nothing in our language to be compared with *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*. The *Ancient Mariner*, published as one of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, belongs to the dim country between earth and heaven, where the fairy music is heard, sometimes dreadful, sometimes lovely, but always

lonely. All that he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold.

147. Of all the poets misnamed Lake Poets, **William Wordsworth** was the greatest. Born in 1770, educated on the banks of Esthwaite, he loved the scenery of the Lakes as a boy, lived among it in his manhood, and died in 1850 at Rydal Mount, close to Rydal Lake. He took his degree in 1791 at Cambridge. The year before, he had made a short tour on the Continent, and stepped on the French shore at the very time when the whole land was "mad with joy." The end of 1791 saw him again in France and living at Orleans. He threw himself eagerly into the Revolution, joined the "patriot side," and came to Paris just after the September massacre of 1792. Narrowly escaping the fate of his friends the Brissotins, he got home to England before the execution of Louis XVI. in 1793, and published his *Descriptive Sketches* and the *Evening Walk*. His sympathy with the French continued, and he took their side against his own country. He was poor, but his friend Raisley Calvert left him 900*l.* and enabled him to live the simple life he had then chosen — the life of a retired poet. At first we find him at Racedown, where in 1797 he made friendship with Coleridge, and then at Alfoxden, in Somerset, where he and Coleridge planned and published in 1798 the first volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*. After a winter in Germany with Coleridge, where the *Prelude* was begun, he took a small cottage at Grasmere, and the

first book of *The Recluse* tells of his settlement in that quiet valley. It tells also of the passion and intensity of the young man who saw infinite visions of work before him, and who lived poor, in daily and unbroken joy. It was in this irradiated world that he wrote the best of his poems. There in 1805–6 he finished the *Prelude*. Another set of the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared in 1800, and in 1807 other poems. The *Excursion* belongs to 1814. From that time till his death he produced from his home at Rydal Mount a long succession of poems.

148. **Wordsworth and Nature.** — The *Prelude* is the history of Wordsworth's poetical growth from a child till 1806. It reveals him as the poet of Nature and of Man. His view of nature was entirely different from that which up to his time the poets had held. Wordsworth conceived, as poet, that nature was alive. It had, he imagined, one living soul which, entering into flower, stream, or mountain, gave them each a soul of their own. Between this Spirit in nature and the mind of man there was a prearranged harmony which enabled nature to communicate its own thoughts to man, and man to reflect upon them, until an absolute union between them was established. This was, in fact, the theory of the Florentine Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance. They did not care for nature, but when Wordsworth either reconceived or adopted this idea, it made him the first who loved nature with a personal love, for she, being living, and personal, and not only his

reflection, was made capable of being loved as a man loves a woman. He could brood on her character, her ways, her words, her life, as he did on those of his wife or sister. Hence arose his minute and loving observation of her and his passionate description of all her life. This was his poetic philosophy with regard to nature, and bound up as it was with the idea of God as the Thought which pervaded and made the world, it rose into a poetic religion of nature and man.

149. **Wordsworth and Man.** — The poet of nature in this special way, Wordsworth is even more the poet of man. It is by his close and loving penetration into the realities and simplicities of human life that he himself makes his claim on our reverence as a poet. He relates in the *Prelude* how he had been led through his love of nature to honour man. The shepherds of the Lake hills, the dalesmen, had been seen by him as part of the wild scenery in which he lived, and he mixed up their life with the grandeur of nature and came to honour them as part of her being. The love of nature led him to the love of man. It was exactly the reverse order to that of the previous poets. At Cambridge, and afterwards, in the crowd of London and in his first tour on the Continent, he received new impressions of the vast world of man, but nature still remained the first. It was only during his life in France and in the excitement of the new theories and their activity that he was swept away from nature and found himself thinking of man as distinct from her and first

in importance. But the hopes he had formed from the Revolution broke down. All his dreams about a new life for mankind were made vile when France gave up liberty for Napoleon; and he was left without love of nature or care for man. It was then that his sister Dorothy, herself worthy of mention in a history of literature, led him back to his early love of nature and restored his mind. Living quietly at Grasmere, he sought in the simple lives of the dalesmen round him for the foundations of what he felt to be a truer view of mankind than the theories of the French Revolution afforded. And in thinking and writing of the common duties and faith, kindnesses and truth of lowly men, he found in man once more

> an object of delight,
> Of pure imagination and of love.

With that he recovered his interest in the larger movements of mankind. His love of liberty and hatred of oppression revived. He saw in Napoleon the enemy of the human race. A series of sonnets followed the events on the Continent. One recorded his horror at the attack on the Swiss, another mourned the fate of Venice, another the fate of Toussaint the negro chief; others celebrated the struggle of Hofer and the Tyrolese, others the struggle of Spain. Two thanksgiving odes rejoiced in the overthrow of the oppressor at Waterloo. He became conservative in his old age, but his interest in social and national movements did not decay. He wrote, and

badly, on Education, the Poor Laws, and other subjects. When almost seventy he took the side of the Carbonari and sympathised with the Italian struggle. He was truly a poet of mankind. But his chief work was done in his own country and among his own folk; and he is the foremost singer of those who threw around the lives of homely men and women the glory and sweetness of song. He made his verse "deal boldly with substantial things"; his theme was "no other than the very heart of man"; and his work has become what he desired it to be, a force to soothe and heal the weary soul of the world, a power like one of nature's, to strengthen or awaken the imagination in mankind. He lies asleep now among the people he loved, in the green churchyard of Grasmere, by the side of the stream of Rothay, in a place as quiet as his life. Few spots on earth are more sacred than his grave.

150. **Sir Walter Scott** was Wordsworth's dear friend, and his career as a poet began with the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805. But before that he had collected, inspired by his revolt from the Revolution to the regretted past, the songs and ballads of the Border. *Marmion* was published in 1808, and the *Lady of the Lake* in 1810. These were his best poems; the others, with the exception of some lyrics which touch the sadness and exultation of life with equal power, do not count in our estimate of him. He brought the narrative poem into a new and delightful excellence. In *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake* his wonderful inventiveness

n story and character is at its height, and it is matched by the vividness of his natural description. No poet, and in this he carries on the old Scottish quality, is a finer colourist. Nearly all his natural description is of the wild scenery of the Highlands and the Lowland moorland. He touched it with a pencil so light, graceful, and true, that the very names are made forever romantic; while his faithful love for the places he describes fills his poetry with the finer spirit of his own tender humanity.

151. Scotland produced another poet in **Thomas Campbell.** His earliest poem, the *Pleasures of Hope*, 1799, belonged in its formal rhythm and rhetoric, and in its artificial feeling for nature, to the time of Thomson and Gray rather than to the newer time. He will chiefly live by his lyrics. *Hohenlinden*, the *Battle of the Baltic*, the *Mariners of England*, are splendid specimens of the war poetry of England; and the *Song to the Evening Star* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, full of tender feeling, mark the influence of the more natural style that Wordsworth had brought to excellence.

152. **Rogers and Moore.** — The *Pleasures of Memory*, 1792, and the *Italy*, 1822, of Samuel Rogers, are the work of a slow and cultivated mind, and contain some laboured but fine descriptions. The curious thing is that, living apart in a courtly region of culture, there is not a trace in all his work that Europe and England and society had passed during his life through a convulsion of change. To that convulsion the best poems of THOMAS

MOORE may be referred. They are the songs he wrote to the Irish airs collected in 1796. The best of them have for their hidden subject the struggle of Ireland against England. Many of them have lyrical beauty and soft melody. At times they reach true pathos, but their lightly lifted gaiety is also delightful. He sang them himself in society, and it is not too much to say that they helped by the interest they stirred to further Catholic Emancipation.

153. We turn to very different types of men when we come to **Byron, Shelley,** and **Keats.** Of the three, LORD BYRON had most of the quality we call force. Born in 1788, his *Hours of Idleness*, a collection of short poems, in 1807, was mercilessly lashed in the *Edinburgh Review*. The attack only served to awaken his genius, and he replied with astonishing vigour in the satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in 1809. Eastern travel gave birth to the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, 1812, to the *Giaour* and the *Bride of Abydos* in 1813, to the *Corsair* and *Lara* in 1814. The *Siege of Corinth*, *Parisina*, the *Prisoner of Chillon*, *Manfred*, and *Childe Harold* were finished before 1819. In 1818 he began a new style in *Beppo*, which he developed fully in the successive issues of *Don Juan*, 1819–24. During this time he published a number of dramas, partly historical, as his *Marino Faliero*, partly imaginative, as the *Cain*. His life had been wild and useless, but he died in trying to redeem it for the sake of the freedom of Greece. At Missolonghi he was seized with fever, and passed away 1 April, 1824.

154. **The Position of Byron as a Poet** is a curious one. He is partly of the past and partly of the present. Something of the school of Pope clings to him; yet no one so completely broke away from old measures and old manners to make his poetry individual, not imitative. At first, he has no interest whatever in the human questions which were so strongly felt by Wordsworth and Shelley. His early work is chiefly narrative poetry, written that he might talk of himself and not of mankind. Nor has he any philosophy except that which centres round the problem of his own being. *Cain*, the most thoughtful of his productions, is in reality nothing more than the representation of the way in which the doctrines of original sin and final reprobation affected his own soul. We feel naturally great interest in this strong personality, put before us with such obstinate power, but it wearies us at last. Finally it wearied himself. As he grew in power, he escaped from his morbid self, and ran into the opposite extreme in *Don Juan*. It is chiefly in it that he shows the influence of the revolutionary spirit. It is written in bold revolt against all the conventionality of social morality and religion and politics. It claimed for himself and for others absolute freedom of individual act and thought in opposition to that force of society which tends to make all men after one pattern. This was the best result of his work, though the way in which it was done can scarcely be approved. As the poet of nature he belongs also to the old and the new school. Byron's sympathy with nature is a sympathy with himself

reflected in her moods. But he also escapes from this position of the later eighteenth century poets, and looks on nature as she is, apart from himself; and this escape is made, as in the case of his poetry of man, in his later poems. Lastly, it is his colossal power and the ease that comes from it, in which he resembles Dryden, as well as his amazing productiveness, which mark him specially. But it is always more power of the intellect than of the imagination.

155. **In Percy Bysshe Shelley,** on the contrary, the imagination is first and the intellect second. He produced while yet a boy some worthless tales, but soon showed in *Queen Mab*, 1813, the influence of the revolutionary era, combined in him with a violent attack on the existing forms of religion. One half of Shelley's poetry, and of his heart, was devoted to help the world towards the golden year he prophesied in *Queen Mab*, and to denounce and overthrow all that stood in its way. The other half was personal, an outpouring of himself in his seeking after the perfect ideal he could not find, and, sadder still, could not even conceive. *Queen Mab* is an example of the first, *Alastor* of the second. The hopes for man with which *Queen Mab* was written grew cold, and he turned from writing about mankind to describe in *Alastor* the life and wandering and death of a lonely poet. But the *Alastor* who isolated the poet from mankind was, in Shelley's own thought, a spirit of evil, and his next poem, the *Revolt of Islam*, 1817, unites him again to the interests of humanity. He wrote it with the

hope that men were beginning to recover from the apathy and despair into which the failure of the revolutionary ideas had thrown them, and to show them what they should strive and hope for, and destroy. The poem itself has finer passages in it than *Alastor*, but as a whole it is inferior to it. It is far too formless. The same year Shelley went to Italy, and never returned to England. He then produced *Rosalind and Helen* and *Julian and Maddalo;* but the new health and joy he now gained brought back his enthusiasm for mankind, and he broke out into the splendid lyric drama of *Prometheus Unbound.* Asia, at the beginning of the drama separated from Prometheus, is the all-pervading Love which in loving makes the universe of nature. When Prometheus is united to Asia, the spirit of Love in man is wedded to the spirit of Love in nature, and all the world of man and nature is redeemed. The marriage of these two, and the distinct existence of each for that purpose, is the same idea as Wordsworth's differently expressed; and Shelley and he are the only two poets who have touched it philosophically, Wordsworth with most contemplation, Shelley with most imagination. *Prometheus Unbound* is the finest example we have of the working out in poetry of the idea of a regenerated universe, and the fourth act is the choral song of its emancipation. Then, Shelley, having expressed this idea with exultant imagination, turned to try his matured power upon other subjects. Two of these were neither personal nor for the sake of man. The first, the drama of the *Cenci*, is as restrained in

expression as the previous poem is exuberant: yet there is no poem of Shelley's in which passion and thought and imagery are so wrought together. The second was the *Adonais*, a lament for the death of John Keats. It is a poem written by one who seems a spirit about a spirit, and belongs in expression, thought, and feeling to that world above the senses in which Shelley habitually lived. Of all this class of poems, to which many of his lyrics belong, *Epipsychidion* is the most impalpable, but, to those who care for Shelley's ethereal world, the finest poem he wrote. Of the same class is the *Witch of Atlas*, the poem in which he has personified divine Imagination in her work in poetry, and imaged all her attendants, and her doings among men.

As a lyric poet, Shelley, on his own ground, is easily great. Some of the lyrics are purely personal; some, as in the very finest, the *Ode to the West Wind*, mingle together personal feeling and prophetic hope for mankind. Some are lyrics of pure nature; some are dedicated to the rebuke of tyranny and the cause of liberty; others belong to the indefinite passion he called love, and others are written on visions of those "shapes that haunt Thought's wildernesses." They form together the most sensitive, the most imaginative, and the most musical, but the least tangible lyrical poetry we possess.

As the poet of nature, he had the same idea as Wordsworth, that nature was alive: but while Wordsworth made the active principle which filled and made nature to be Thought, Shelley made it Love. The natural

world was dear then to his soul as well as to his eye, but he loved best its indefinite aspects. He wants the closeness of grasp of nature which Wordsworth and Keats had, but he had the power in a far greater degree than they of describing the cloud-scenery of the sky, the doings of the great sea, and vast realms of landscape. He is in this, as well as in his eye for subtle colour, the Turner of poetry. What he might have been we cannot tell, for at the age of thirty he left us, drowned in the sea he loved, washed up and burned on the sandy spits near Pisa. His ashes lie beneath the walls of Rome, and *Cor cordium*, "Heart of hearts," written on his tomb, well says what all who love poetry feel when they think of him.

156. **John Keats** lies near him, cut off like him before his genius ripened; not so ideal, but for that very reason more naturally at home with nature than Shelley. In one thing he was entirely different from Shelley—he had no care whatever for the great human questions which stirred Shelley; the present was entirely without interest to him. He marks the close of that poetic movement which the ideas of the Revolution had crystallised in England, as Shelley marks the attempt to revive it. Keats, seeing nothing to move him in an age which had now sunk into apathy on these points, went back to Spenser, and especially to Shakespeare's minor poems, to find his inspiration; to Greek and mediæval life to find his subjects, and established, in doing so, that which has been called the *literary poetry* of England. Leigh

Hunt, his friend and Shelley's, did part of this work. The first subject on which Keats worked, after some minor poems in 1817, was *Endymion*, 1818, his last, *Hyperion*, 1820. These, along with *Lamia*, which is, on the whole, the finest of his longer poems, were poems of Greek life. *Endymion* has all the faults and all the promise of a great poet's early work, and no one knew its faults better than Keats, whose preface is a model of just self-judgment. *Hyperion*, a fragment of a tale of the overthrow of the Titans, is itself like a Titanic torso. Its rhythm was derived from Milton, but its poetry is wholly his own. But the mind of Keats was as yet too luxuriant to support the greatness of his subject's argument, and the poem dies away. It is beautiful, even in death. Both poems are filled with that which was deepest in the mind of Keats, the love of loveliness for its own sake, the sense of its rightful and pre-eminent power; and in the singleness of worship which he gave to Beauty, Keats is especially the ideal poet. Then he took us back into mediæval romance, and in this also he started a new type of poetry. There are two poems which mark this revival — *Isabella*, and the *Eve of St. Agnes*. Mediæval in subject, they are modern in manner; but they are, above all, of the poet himself. Their magic is all his own. In smaller poems, such as the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, the poem *To Autumn*, to the *Nightingale*, and some sonnets, he is the fairest of all Apollo's children. He knew the inner soul of words. He felt the world where ideas and their forms are one, where nature and

humanity, before they divide, flow from a single source. In all his poems, his painting of nature is as close as Wordsworth's, but more ideal; less full of the imagination that links human thought to nature, but more full of the imagination which broods upon enjoyment of beauty. He was not much interested in human questions, but as his mind grew, humanity made a more and more imperative call upon him. Had he lived, his poetry would have dealt more closely with the heart of man. His letters, some of the most original in the English language, show this clearly. The second draft of *Hyperion*, unpublished in his lifetime, and inferior as poetry to the first, accuses himself of apartness from mankind, and expresses his resolve to write of Man, the greatest subject of all. Whether he could have done this well remains unknown. His career was short; he had scarcely begun to write when death took him away from the loveliness he loved so keenly. Consumption drove him to Rome, and there he died, save for one friend, alone. He lies not far from Shelley, on the "slope of green access," near the pyramid of Caius Cestius. He sleeps apart; he is himself a world apart.

157. **Modern English Poetry.** — Keats marks the exhaustion of the impulse which began with Burns and Cowper. There was no longer now in England any large wave of public thought or feeling such as could awaken the national emotion and life out of which poetry is naturally born. We have then, arising after the deaths of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, a number of pretty little

poems, having no inward fire, no idea, no marked character. They might be written by any versifier at any time, and express pleasant, indifferent thought in pleasant verse. Such were Mrs. Hemans' poems, and those of L. E. L., and such were Tennyson's earliest poems, in 1830. There were, however, a few men who, close to 1820 and 1822, had drunk at the fountain of Shelley, and who, for a very brief time, continued, amid the apathy, to write with some imagination and fervour. T. L. Beddoes, whose only valuable work was done between 1822 and 1825, was one of these. George Darley, whose *Sylvia* earned the praise of Coleridge, was another. They represent in their imitation of Shelley, in their untutored imagination, the last struggles of the poetic phase which closed with the death of Byron. When Browning imitated or rather loved Shelley in his first poem, *Pauline*, it was to bid Shelley farewell; when Tennyson imitated Byron and was haunted by Keats in his first poems, it was also to bid them both farewell. Then Tennyson and Browning passed on to strike unexpected waters out of the rocks and to pour two rivers of fresh poetry over the world. For with the Reform agitation, and the twofold religious movement at Oxford, which was of the same date, a novel national excitement came on England, and with it the new tribe of poets arose among whom we have lived. The elements of their poetry were also new, though we can trace their beginnings in the previous poetry. This poetry took up, so far as Art could touch them, the theological, social, and even the political ques-

tions which disturbed England. It came, before long, moved by the critical and scientific inquiries into the origins of religion and man and the physical world, to represent the scepticism of England and the struggle for faith against doubt. It gave itself t metaphysics, but chiefly under the expression and analysis of the characters of men and women. It played with a vast variety of subjects, and treated them all with a personal passion which filled them with emotion. It worked out, from the point of view of deep feeling, the relation of man to God, and of man to sorrow and immortality. It studied and brought to great excellence the Idyll, the Song, and the short poem on classic subjects with a reference to modern life. It increased, to an amazing extent, the lyrical poetry of England. The short lyric was never written in such numbers and of such excellence since the days of Elizabeth. It recaptured and clothed in a new dress the Arthurian tale, and linked us, back through many poets, to the days of legend and delight. It re-established for us in this new time, as the most natural and most emotional subject of English poetry, England, her history, her people, and her landscape, so that the new poets have described not only the whole land but the natural scenery and historical story, the human and animal life of the separate counties. Our native land, as in the days of Elizabeth, has been idealised.

Nor did this new impulse stay in England only. It went abroad for its subjects, and especially to Italy. It

strove to express the main characteristics of periods of history and of art, of the origins of religions and of Christianity, of classic and Renaissance thought at critical times, and of lyric passion in modern life. Indeed, it aimed at a universal representation of human life and at a subtle characterisation of individual temperaments. Thus, it was a poetry of England, and also of the larger world beyond England.

Apart from the main stream of poetry, there were separate streams which represented distinct passages in the general movement. The *Sonnets* of Charles Tennyson Turner, which began in 1830, stand by their grace and tenderness at the head of a large production of poetry which describes with him the shy, sequestered, observant life of the English scholar and lover of nature, of country piety and country people. One man among them stands alone, William Barnes, of Dorsetshire. The time will come when the dialect in which he wrote will cease to prevent the lovers of poetry from appreciating at its full worth a poetry which, written in the mother-tongue of the poor and of his own heart, is as close to the lives and souls of simple folk as it is to the woods and streams, the skies and farms of rustic England. Among them also is Coventry Patmore, who, though alive, belongs to the past. What Barnes did for the peasant and the farmer, Patmore did for the cultivated life which in quiet English counties gathers round the church, the parsonage, and the hall, the lives and piety of the English homes that are still the haunts of ancient

peace. His work, with its retired and careful if over-delicate note, is a true picture of a small part of English life. But it has the faults of its excellences.

The High Church and Broad Church movements, as they were called, produced two sets of poetical writers who also stand somewhat apart from the main line of English poetry. The first is best represented by John Keble, whose *Christian Year*, in 1827, with its poetry, so good within its own range, so weak beyond it, was the source of many books of poems of a similar but inferior character. On the other hand the impulse towards a wider theology was combined in some poets with a laxer morality than England is accustomed to maintain, and Bailey's *Festus*, 1839, was the first of a number of sensational poems which painted the struggles of the spirit towards immortal life, and of the senses towards mortal love with equal effervescence. A noble translation of *Omar Khayyám* by Edward Fitzgerald, and the fine ballad-songs and *Andromeda* of Charles Kingsley, may also be said to flow apart from the main stream in which poetry flowed.

Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning (whose wife will justly share his fame) began to write between 1830 and 1833, and continued their work side by side for fifty years, when they died, almost together. Both of them were wholly original, and both of them, differing at every point of their art, kept with extraordinary vitality their main powers, and were capable of fresh invention, even to the very last. They passed through a long period of change and development, during which all the existing

foundations of faith and knowledge and art were dug out, investigated, tested, and an attempt made to reconstruct them, an attempt which still pursues its work. They lived and wrote in sympathy with the emotions which this long struggle created in the minds of men, and expressed as much of these emotions as naturally fell within their capability and within the sphere of poetry. And this they did with great eagerness and intensity. Their love of beauty and of their art was unbroken, and they had as much power, as they had desire, to shape the thought and the loveliness they saw — great poets who have illuminated, impelled, adorned, and exalted the world in which we live.

At first the great inquiry into the roots of things disturbed the next generation of poets, those who stepped to the front between 1850 and 1860; and as Arthur Hugh Clough expressed the trouble of the want of clear light on the fates of men and their only refuge in duty, so Matthew Arnold, more deeply troubled, embodied in his poetry, even in his early book of 1852, the restlessness, the dimness, the hopelessness of a world which had lost the vision of the ancient stars and could cling to nothing but a stoic conduct. But he did this with keen sorrow, and with a vivid interest in the world around him. Then about 1860 the poets grew weary of the whole struggle. Theology, the just aim and ends of life, science, political and social questions, ceased on the whole to awaken the slightest interest in them. Exactly that which took place in the case of Keats now took place. The poets sought

only for what was beautiful, romantic, of ancient heroism, far from a tossed and wearied world, far from all its tiresome questions. Dante G. Rossetti, whose sister, Christina, touched the romantic and religious lyric with original beauty, was the leader of this school. He, and others still alive, found their chief subjects in ancient Rome and Greece, in stories and lyrics of passion, in mediæval romance, in Norse legends, in the old England of Chaucer, and in Italy. But this literary poetry has now almost ceased to be produced, and has been succeeded as in 1825 by a vast criticism of poetry, and by a multitudinous production, much inspired from France, of poetry, chiefly lyrical, which has few elements of endurance and little relation to life. What will emerge from this we cannot tell, but we only need some new human inspiration, having a close relation to the present, and bearing with it a universal emotion, to create in England another school of poetry as great as that which arose in the beginning of this century, and worthy of the traditions which have made England the creator and lover of poetry for more than 1200 years.

CHAPTER IX

PROSE LITERATURE FROM THE DEATH OF SCOTT TO THE DEATH OF GEORGE ELIOT (1832–1881)

158. **The Growth of the Reading Public.** — It has been pointed out (page 196) that, with the middle of the eighteenth century, there began in England a period of rapid increase in manufactures, science, and prosperity, which was paralleled by a remarkable growth in literature. This increase in material welfare has continued throughout the nineteenth century. Science has made greater progress within a hundred years than within the five preceding centuries, and the discoveries of science have affected in a most wonderful way the lives of men. The greater part of the population of Great Britain, even people of the smallest means, may live in accordance with nature's laws, supplied with proper food, water, clothing, and shelter, and free from dangerous epidemics. Laws have given greater liberty to the individual, have mitigated the lot of the poor and unfortunate, and have helped to reform the vicious. Improvements in machinery, the growth of commerce, and the colonisation of new lands, have aided in the greater diffusion of

wealth among the people; and, though various industrial and economic causes still tend to crowd the poor into unhealthy districts of large cities, and deprive them of the full rewards of their labour, it is, in the main, true that, in point of material welfare, the average Englishman has at his command far more means towards health and happiness than he would have had a century ago. Education, too, is more widely spread: we all know more of the essential facts of history and principles of science, have a truer idea of what life means, and are thus better prepared to enjoy and appreciate literature.

This increase in material prosperity has been accompanied by a remarkable growth in population. In 1800 the population of Great Britain and Ireland was about 15,000,000. In 1899 it is about 40,000,000. If, moreover, we would estimate the present extent of the English-speaking race, we must add to these 40,000,000 the even greater population of the United States, as well as the English-speaking population of the colonies and possessions of Great Britain in various parts of the world. The total would probably exceed 125,000,000.

With this growth of English-speaking people in many separate lands, it has come about that each of the large bodies of the race has developed, to some extent, its own special literature; and within a century it will probably be necessary to discuss, not only the literature of England itself, but that of Canada and Australia, just as, in subsequent chapters, we find it necessary to treat briefly of literature in the United States of America, or,

as it is loosely called, American literature. For the present we can afford to neglect, in a sketch of English literature, the literature of the British colonies; but it is important that we should remember that the boundaries of the reading public are no longer those of the times of Addison, when there was little writing outside of London, and authors there felt that they were addressing largely their own immediate circle of friends and fellow-citizens. For, though no one book, except the Bible, can be known to even a majority of the great total referred to, any book in English may, according to the degree to which it is fitted to instruct and entertain the people, reach the hands of multitudes of men, women, and children, not only in England, but wherever the English tongue is spoken. The English language, too, has become so important that it is understood by many cultivated people of other nationalities, so that an English book of merit may also be read in all civilised countries. The city-audience of the beginning of the eighteenth century has thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, become almost a world-audience.

Many changes, similar to those mentioned in pages 196–98, have also come about in the tastes and needs of the wide public to whom the literature of this century is addressed: —

(1) As has been explained above (page 196), a good prose style has been inherited from the eighteenth century and has been perfected in this century. Educated men are born, as it were, into a good school of compo-

sition, and, profiting by the experience of their predecessors, do not now have to discover for themselves how to make their meaning clear and their style effective.

(2) The increase in health, wealth, and comfort on the part of the people at large has given us leisure to read and means to purchase books, while the extraordinary development of railways and of postal and telegraph systems has, in many respects, made each of the English-speaking nations almost a unit in feeling, and has greatly increased the bonds of sympathy and understanding between them. The whole race may know almost immediately what is known and felt by any large body of individuals in it. The common interests of the race are thus emphasised, and the thought of any individual stimulated and broadened by his acquaintance with the experience of his brothers.

(3) The same and similar causes have given a great impetus to the press. Not only are many more books printed than formerly; not only have newspapers increased rapidly in numbers and circulation; but there has arisen a host of periodicals, published weekly or at longer intervals, devoted less to news than to literature, which together reach a large part of the reading public. It may even be doubted whether the reading of people, at the end of the century, does not consist less of books than of periodicals of various sorts, including newspapers. This enormous growth of periodical literature has been rendered possible by the inventions that make printing less costly and more rapid, and by the fact that

periodicals receive for the advertising of merchandise large sums which may be drawn upon for the payment of authors and artists. Books and periodicals have become cheaper, and, through the better organisation of the publishing trade, more easily obtainable. It is now possible to procure, for a comparatively small sum, a library which even fifty years ago would have been beyond the means of any but the rich.

(4) It has been remarked (page 197) that in the eighteenth century communication with the continent of Europe increased, so that English literature stimulated that of other European nations, and was in turn stimulated by them. This process still continues. The civilised world has in some respects become a single body, for purposes of culture; and ideas or works of art that appeal strongly to one nation have their influence upon all. With regard to English literature more particularly, it is noteworthy that a similar process has tended to remove the barriers between different classes of the reading public. The reduction in the price of printed matter; the increase in the amount; the growth of rapid communication; the consequent increase in knowledge, on the part of each individual or community, of what is thought and done by other individuals or communities; the industrial and legal changes that have tended to obliterate the differences in experience and opportunity between rich and poor; the decay of social distinctions; the increase in education among all classes, — all these have assisted in bringing about a

remarkable unity of sentiment. An author may feel not only that he addresses a large audience, but that he is, to a great degree, in sympathy with large and apparently diverse portions of that audience. Nor is he addressing men alone, for, from the eighteenth century on, with new opportunities for education, women have constituted an increasingly large part of the English reading public, which is now composed of both sexes and of all classes, in many lands.

The expansion of the reading public, which is characteristic of this century and which has been described above, and the accompanying increase in the production of printed matter, make it exceedingly difficult to summarise the history of English literature in this century. We must limit ourselves by speaking, with only the rarest exceptions, of men no longer living, and of English authors who have exerted a strong influence on the more thoughtful parts of this public. We must necessarily omit many such authors, but we must be careful not to include authors whose works, though they were widely circulated and became favourites with large numbers of people, have failed to exert a permanent influence, and, with slight changes of the popular taste, have passed into oblivion.

159. **The Victorian Age.** — The period of prosperity which dawned upon England at about the time of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, and which has lasted throughout the century, has been attended by an intellectual and emotional awakening of the nation, of which

the growth of the reading public is merely a sign. In the fine arts, in the industrial arts, in pure and applied science, — in all branches of human activity, — the period has been one of continuous development. The literature of the period has been remarkable for its variety and excellence, not only in poetry, but in the several branches of prose. It has been lacking only in the drama, which has been so inconspicuous that we need not again refer to it. This lack seems to be mainly due to the fact that, following the line of Scott's successes, authors have cultivated the novel, which has throughout the century been the most profitable branch of literature, and to the fact that until recently it has been possible for the managers of theatres to please their audiences by the translation or adaptation of clever French plays.

160. **The Romantic School in Prose.** — The romantic school in poetry has been clearly described in the preceding chapter (pages 213–18). From the middle of the eighteenth century on, men had been turning away from the more formal classic models, and had been increasingly influenced by earlier English poetry, by the quaintness and romance of mediæval life, by a desire to make use of the more impressive elements of verse, and, especially, by a growing sympathy for that in life which had the greatest emotional value. Under such influences the poetry of the nineteenth century became, in many respects, radically different from that of the eighteenth. The same influences were working to trans-

form prose literature, both in matter and in style. As to matter, it will be noticed that in this century writers have been deeply interested in the emotional life of the past and the present, tending in novels to the narration of stirring incidents or the portrayal of striking types, and, in other forms of prose, to whatever moved the hearts of the people through beauty, sympathy, sense of contrast, or the embodiment of vigorous ideals. They have been anxious to draw on all material that would incite us to tears or laughter, or that would fill us with enthusiasm, or that seemed to involve impressive or impelling truths. This impulse has been, to a great extent, shared by the other great European literatures. It has persisted throughout the century, and is still, in a somewhat modified form, a dominant force.

161. **The Scientific Movement.** — Less easily recognised, less often flowering into great literature, there runs throughout the period a strong impulse towards research and observation, towards the accurate and dispassionate statement of the full truth in all branches of human knowledge. In science, men who appreciated the grandeur and dignity of their calling have made efforts to make clear to the common people the results of organised investigation; in history and economics, to make clear the real purport of past and present events and the principles of human action involved; and in philosophy, theology, and kindred subjects of enquiry, to learn the truth at all costs and to reproduce it faithfully. In the novel a similar impulse, common to most

modern literatures, has led some writers to a more detailed observation of the facts of life, and to the presentation of them in a less fanciful fashion. This method is called "realism." It was at first feared that the whole scientific movement would tend to weaken the power of the imagination in literature; but there seems to be room in our hearts for both interests, — that in life as portrayed by the skilled observer and that in life as portrayed by the man of imagination, — and it is growing clearer that the two can often be combined.

162. **Prose Style in the Nineteenth Century.** — By the middle of the eighteenth century a good prose style had already been formed. It was clear and orderly, — the courteous language of accomplished gentlemen, — and was free from the intricacy and eccentricity of earlier periods. In Goldsmith it was simple and flowing; in Johnson, dignified, if not pompous; in Burke and Gibbon, sonorous. In the nineteenth century the essential qualities of clearness and dignity have been perpetuated; but we have also learned to expect, in prose literature, a certain melody or singing quality, as if the writer were appealing to the ear even more than to the eye; and, even when this is absent, at least an earnest eloquence, as is appropriate when the appeal is to the emotions as well as to the intellect.

163. **The Novel.** — From Defoe to Scott the hold of the novel on the public grew stronger. Each great novelist, moreover, added something to the development of his art. Defoe taught his skill in arousing curiosity;

Richardson, the use of detail and of sentiment; Fielding, the creation of characters that have all the semblance of reality; Smollett, the force of rough humour and the sketching of whimsical characters; Miss Austen, the building up of characters through minute observation. Scott first gave the modern public the taste for the rapidly moving tale of romantic adventure.

Dickens succeeded Scott as a popular favourite, but before taking him up we must speak of several novelists of less importance in the early part of the century. FREDERICK MARRYAT followed Smollett in his rough tales of sea life, the best of which are *Peter Simple* (1834) and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836). Full of eccentric characters, practical jokes, and amusing incidents, they portrayed so admirably the bluff and hearty side of active life as long to keep their freshness and charm. CHARLES LEVER, an Irishman, in *Charles O'Malley* (1841) and many other tales of the same sort, did for the army what Marryat did for the navy. His novels are weak in plot, but full of dashing adventure and bubbling over with merriment. BENJAMIN DISRAELI, Earl of Beaconsfield, the great Tory statesman, was the author of many novels dealing with fashionable life, of which the best are perhaps *Coningsby* (1844) and *Sybil* (1845), which have in common the motive of explaining the principles and ideals on which he based the reconstruction of his party. Loose in plot, but brilliant in style, they won the public partly through their cleverness, partly because they dealt

with the rich and the great, and partly because they are mainly biographies, as it were, of ardent, impressionable, and ambitious minds. They are likewise remarkable because in them, for the first time in English literature, were revealed the brilliance and wisdom of the Jewish race. Edward Lytton Bulwer, Lord Lytton, more commonly known as BULWER-LYTTON, wrote a long series of novels with the definite purpose of entertaining the public. They were of many sorts, as became his versatile genius, and were received with favour partly because, like Disraeli's, they drew many of their characters from high life, of which the growing multitude of readers heard with delight, but chiefly because they often dealt with mystery and crime, and because, again like Disraeli's tales, they followed Byron's narrative poems in presenting, in an heroic light, men of great ambition, whether for good or for ill. Romanticism worshipped the individual whose spirit was high and whose will was strong. The novel of Bulwer-Lytton's that retains its interest most permanently is *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), which is fortunate in having as its theme one of the most tragic events in all history. GEORGE BORROW's intimate acquaintance with the Gypsies and his experiences as a colporteur in Spain gave him material for *The Bible in Spain* (1843), *Lavengro* (1851), and other volumes of romantic adventure. To CHARLOTTE BRONTË belongs the distinction of having produced perhaps the most typical English novel of the Romantic school, *Jane Eyre* (1847), the heroine of which conceals

an indomitable will under the exterior of a quiet and plain governess, on whom is centred the fiery passion of a grim hero of higher station.

The real successor of Scott, however, was CHARLES DICKENS, who, from *Pickwick Papers* (1837) to *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), poured forth a series of remarkable novels, which were read wherever the English tongue was known, and which made their author beloved from the palace of the prince to the camp of the Californian miner. If Scott was the Wizard of the North, Dickens was the Wizard of the South. He had Scott's genius for story-telling; he knew the way to the hearts of the people; and, at a time when the uniformity of modern life was beginning to do away with many of the external differences between persons and places, he followed Smollett in creating a host of odd characters, taken largely from the ranks of the poor and the humble. These fantastic figures he produced in such numbers and with such vitality that they form a little world of their own; and we often say of odd people that they look as if they had stepped from the pages of Dickens. His tales all appeal strongly to the emotions, sometimes by humour, sometimes by horror or pathos. They all have a strong dramatic element, — are now farcical, now melodramatic, and, at their best, delightful comedies. His queer characters have the semblance of life, but we feel them to be creatures of the fancy, who could not exist in an actual world. In spite of this, he was a man who knew well what English life was, especially among

the poorer classes, and earnestly tried to make it better by picturing its evils; and his tender heart and the wonderful power of his fancy made him one of the great English story-tellers.

Equally great as a master of tears and gentle laughter was WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, who, though less widely popular than Dickens, was, and is, on the whole, a greater favourite with readers of more social experience. Of gentler birth, breeding, and education, Thackeray began his career by dabbling both in art and in letters; and it was only in 1848, when *Vanity Fair* appeared, that the public realised that a new and great interpreter of life had arisen. *Vanity Fair* was followed by *Pendennis* (1850), *Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1855), and *The Virginians* (1859), as well as by two volumes of lectures, *English Humourists* (1853) and *The Four Georges* (1860). A just idea of Thackeray's merits can be obtained by contrasting his work with that of Dickens. (1) In the field of the creative imagination they are both great, but Thackeray's characters belong largely to the so-called upper classes. (2) Thackeray's characters, like those of Fielding, impress one less as odd than as real, less as what we could fancy ourselves as being than as what we are. (3) Thackeray does not so much tell a rapid and exciting tale as follow a curious form of confidential address, as if he were actually speaking directly to the reader. His style and his matter are full of the personal qualities of a man who, by sympathy and experience,

knew the life of the social world, and presented his views, without exaggeration, in the careless but modulated voice of a gentleman in conversation. The absence of melodrama in his writings, and his habit of gently railing at cant and hypocrisy in all its forms, have sometimes brought on him the reproach of cynicism; but it is now more apparent that his zeal was always for truth and honour. He felt stirring in his own heart the impulses that led now to virtue, now to vice, and was too candid to represent life as other than it was; too full of sympathy with all his brother-men to represent them otherwise than as compounded of the clay of which we all are fashioned. His *Henry Esmond* is generally agreed to be, of all historical novels in English, that which most faithfully reproduces the life of a vanished epoch, and may profitably be contrasted, in its methods, with Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*.

Marian Evans, who wrote under the name of GEORGE ELIOT, was a country girl of great power of mind and much learning, who reached middle life before she realised that she had a natural talent for the creation of character and the telling of tales. In her first stories and novels, — *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858), *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), — she revealed her talent, and displayed also, in dealing with simple and earnest characters and with country life, much power of humour, of pathos, and even of tragedy, and especially a deep feeling for moral problems. In her later works, — *Romola* (1863), *Felix*

Holt (1866), *Middlemarch* (1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), — she threw an increasingly greater stress on ethical problems, so that her novels became really studies in the portrayal of the conscience and moral development or retrogression of men and women. Those who like best novels dealing with the lighter sides of life, or those in which the ethical purpose is less explicit, have thought her later work inferior to her earlier; but the English public has always gladly read literature in which such purposes were prominent, and George Eliot's hold on the people at large has not been greatly weakened on this account. Less famous than Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, she retains an honoured place in English literature by right of her power as a story-teller and a creator of character, and of her success in dealing with the moral and religious elements in life.

Our century has been rich in minor novelists, each with a special claim to recognition. MRS. GASKELL is best known by her *Cranford* (1853), a story of village life which reveals both sympathy and close observation, and which has become a classic. ANTHONY TROLLOPE wrote more than any of his contemporaries, and though his quiet but pleasing novels of life in the country and in the cathedral towns, of which *Barchester Towers* (1857) is a good example, never reached the first rank, they were almost uniform in excellence, and won, to no small degree, the favour of the public. CHARLES READE wrote with more vivacity. His was a manly spirit, hating fraud and useless convention; and his novels, of which

Put Yourself in his Place (1870) is typical, strike at the false and commend the true in modern civilisation. He was also the author of a good historical novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1860). CHARLES KINGSLEY was a clergyman and a reformer, and his novels, like himself, were overflowing with physical energy and moral earnestness. He is best known by a charming tale for children, *The Water Babies* (1863), and by two historical novels, *Hypatia* (1853) and *Westward Ho!* (1855). Greater than any of these writers is GEORGE MEREDITH, whose *Richard Feverel* (1859), *Beauchamp's Career* (1875), and *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) have been recognised by acute readers as showing a rare power of analysing the more subtle sides of human nature, and a rare power of portraying characters of great charm and nobility. Unfortunately, a somewhat whimsical style and method of narration has kept him from being as widely read as Dickens and Thackeray, to whose class he belongs by the type and scope of his genius.

The last third of the century has seen, in Europe, the rise of the realistic school of fiction, which endeavours to give an accurate picture of life as it actually appears to the observer, but which, on the continent, has shown a tendency to take for its subject-matter, in many instances, vice and crime and the ignoble side of man's character. English fiction, throughout the century, has, on the whole, preferred to follow a less scientific and more purely fanciful or idealistic method, though from Jane Austen down a strong undercurrent of realism

has, from time to time, made itself manifest; the tendency to treat dispassionately of crime and vice has been wholly absent. While standing somewhat aloof, in this respect, from the realistic movement, English fiction has, in the last two decades of the century, revived the novel of romantic adventure, returning to the field opened by Scott; and the public, perhaps a little weary of novels of society, reform, and ethics, has welcomed the change. Of the new writers of tales of adventure by sea and land the chief was ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, who, while himself fighting bravely against disease, delighted young and old by his *New Arabian Nights* (1882), *Treasure Island* (1883), a tale of pirates, and by *Kidnapped* (1886) and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), in which the elements of adventure and of character are cunningly combined.

The nineteenth century has done its work in presenting us with almost all the possible ways of treating human life in fiction. The twentieth century must follow the general methods of the nineteenth, combining and extending them, as our century has done with the methods of Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett. A very great number of novels is published each year, but it is plain that, though many writers are skilled in this form of composition, few or none give promise of becoming masters. It is plain, too, that the hold of the short story is growing stronger. What the nineteenth century has taught us is sympathy. We have learned to feel, through the art of the narrator, what men and women are doing

and suffering throughout the world; and we give our sympathy both to the more complex group of characters and more intricate series of events portrayed in the novel and to those indicated in the less detailed, more rapid and suggestive short story, the very movement and brevity of which seem so highly typical of modern life and emotion.

164. **History.** — We now turn to other branches of prose-writing, in which, not through fictions, but by the clear and impressive statement of what they believed to be facts and principles, men have won honour and influence over their fellows.

The essays and history of THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY have been almost as widely read as the novels of Scott and Dickens. He had been a precocious boy, with a prodigious memory, great industry, and a genius for the accumulation and organisation of facts; and he was but a young man when, in 1825, he astonished the public by a remarkable essay on Milton, in which he sketched rapidly, but brilliantly, the life, works, and times of the Puritan poet. From his first essay to his last, Macaulay's skill, vivacity, and information never flagged, and he became the people's great painter of historical scenes and historical characters, excelling in his power of visualising the events and the personages of the past. This power was even more clearly shown in the uncompleted *History of England from the Accession of James II.* (1848–60). Macaulay wrote at a time when the reading public was

rapidly increasing, when knowledge of history was likewise growing, and when, partly led on by Scott, men were eager to understand and realise for themselves the character and meaning of past events. That Macaulay was able to satisfy this longing was due not only to his power of imagination, but to his clear, rapid, and entertaining style, which had a strong influence on journalism and letters. Macaulay's mind was downright and positive. His information was often insufficient, his judgment hasty, his attitude prejudiced; but his clear and brilliant intellect and his clear and brilliant style made him, of all the writers of the century, the greatest populariser of history.

THOMAS CARLYLE was a man of a wholly different sort. He had known poverty, physical pain, and mental suffering. He was irritable, morose, inclined to believe that most men were fools, and that what truth and nobility there was in the world was disguised and concealed by the wrappings of hypocrisy, cant, and affectation. His first important work, *Sartor Resartus* (1834), a "philosophy of clothes," expresses in a grotesque form this pessimistic feeling and his resolve to find and hold fast to the truth in a world of shams. It was this resolve that led him to the field of history. In *The French Revolution* (1837), *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841), *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), and *History of Frederick II* (1858–65), he expounded with great energy and vividness the idea that the truly great men, the heroes, are those who battle against the

folly and vice of the multitudes, and that it is they who should be admired and followed as prophets and teachers. Carlyle's style is broken and grotesque, but at times full of grandeur. His great power over men lay in his genius for worshipping the noble and energetic and steadfast in warrior-characters; in a skill not wholly unlike Macaulay's in visualising their acts and their surroundings; and in a power transcending Macaulay's for analysing and appreciating the motives that sway men. Carlyle also exerted a strong influence on the thought and literature of the century by introducing into England a knowledge of German philosophy and letters, which were at that time of a particularly stimulating character.

Comparable with Macaulay and Carlyle in the power of imaginative visualisation of the past was JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, whose *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Armada* (1856–69) charmed all by its brilliant and rapid style, its grasp alike of character and of political history, and its note of patriotic devotion. With all this, Froude was peculiarly prone to errors of fact and of judgment.

Throughout the century there have been many historians of note, but, with the possible exception of JOHN RICHARD GREEN, whose *Short History of the English People* (1874) combined a picturesque and sympathetic style with painstaking accuracy and sound scholarship, they wrote for the learned public, and have been little known or appreciated by the general public. Among

these are the two historians of Greece, GEORGE GROTE and BISHOP THIRLWALL; DEAN MILMAN, the historian of Latin Christianity; and CHARLES MERIVALE, the historian of the Roman Empire. To these names, which show how English interest clung to the history of classical and early Christian times, should be added those of HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE, author of a stimulating but incomplete *History of Civilisation in Europe* (1857–61), and EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN, whose elaborate *History of the Norman Conquest* (1867–76) was perhaps the most painstakingly accurate English historical work of the century.

165. **Criticism.** — We now turn to a group of writers who were scarcely less important than Macaulay and Carlyle, in that they helped to improve the taste of the public and to stimulate, to a considerable degree, interest in art and letters. Chief among these was JOHN RUSKIN, whose enthusiasm for nature and art and constant appeal to the emotions rather than to the intellect mark his kinship with the poets and novelists of the romantic school. In his two longer works, *Modern Painters* (1843–60) and *Stones of Venice* (1851–53), as well as in many minor writings, he called forcibly to the attention of his countrymen — at a time when the tendency was to conventionalise art and to make social economics a matter of abstract calculation — the minute beauties of nature, especially in clouds and mountains, the charm and inner meaning of mediæval and Renaissance art, and the forgotten truths that even humble call-

ings have a dignity of their own when rightly followed, and that happiness is not to be measured by rank nor value and worth by gold alone. Full of prejudices, an implacable foe to modern industrial progress, often lacking in accurate knowledge of the matters he treated, and prone to make laws of art by generalisation from his personal fancies, he was, in spite of all this, a powerful influence in breaking down foolish conventions and in opening the eyes of many to the beauty of the art of the past and to the glory and shame of contemporary civilisation. His style is among the most beautiful in English literature, — rich and sonorous, with a lyric swing and cadence.

MATTHEW ARNOLD performed a service for literature somewhat similar to that which Ruskin performed for art, though he appealed less to the emotions of his readers and more to their critical faculties. He wrote much on questions of Church and State, and much in analysis of existing social conditions, frequently in a tone half-bantering, half-serious. His more permanent work is contained in his two series of *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888), in which he tried to make clear that scholars and thoughtful people generally throughout all Europe were attacking the problems of literature, philosophy, science, and kindred subjects in much the same orderly way, and in accordance with much the same fundamental beliefs and principles. He illustrated this conception by a critical estimate of several famous authors, in essays which have themselves become famous

and did a great deal to convince the public that judgments as to the kind or value of literary productions are not matters of whim or fancy, but may be profitably discussed on the basis of æsthetic and ethical principles. Arnold's style was calm and resolute, and owed much of its effectiveness to his curious habit of repeating at intervals a phrase or catchword, such as "sweetness and light," which recalled forcibly his main tenet. Arnold was dogmatic in his opinions, but he always explained his reasons for holding them; and one who disagreed with his results could determine how and why the disagreement came about. He thus acted as a clarifier of thought in every field which he touched.

Ruskin and Arnold, with Carlyle, were the great influences on criticism in this period, but two minor critics of literature deserve mention, WALTER BAGEHOT and WALTER PATER. Bagehot was a banker, and rendered criticism and literature itself an important service by neglecting the implicit convention of men of letters that criticism belonged to them alone, and, without pretence at an elaborate style or method, by showing what judgment an acute man of affairs had to pass on books and authors. It thus became clear — and it is each year growing clearer — that literature is written for all, and may be fairly judged by all who read with open eyes and an open heart. Pater rendered criticism an equally great service by the extraordinary subtlety and skill of his analysis of all æsthetic pleasures. Practically without a profession, he lived a life of leisure and seclusion,

devoting himself entirely to the quest of the beautiful and the delicate analysis of all its effects. He believed that each art, and each work of any of the arts, has its own peculiar note, as it were, of beauty, and can be best enjoyed when that note is discovered and appreciated. This stimulating conception was developed in *Studies in the Renaissance* (1873) and *Appreciations* (1889). He was also the author of *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), an historical novel, in which the philosophic, religious, and literary thought of the second century was analysed in accordance with the same principle.

166. **Theology, Philosophy, and Science.** — England has been lacking in great theologians and philosophers during this period. In religious literature the strongest influence was that of JOHN HENRY NEWMAN; in philosophy, that of JOHN STUART MILL. The circumstances of Cardinal Newman's career, no less than his high abilities, made him the most distinguished representative in English-speaking countries of an historic church; and his voice, in the minds of many, came to stand for all the processes of thought and feeling involved in Christianity as an ancient organised body of belief and tradition. His style, too, was resonant and powerful, yet subtle, and based on Roman models; and its exquisite purity and dignity gain by contrast with the emotional whimsicalities of Carlyle, and even of Ruskin. His many volumes of sermons, his *Idea of a University* (1854), his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), and other

works of greater or less importance, had a strong influence on thoughtful men, who found in them an almost perfect expression of noble and spiritual thoughts.

Mill was eminent in metaphysics; but it is characteristic of him and his race that he devoted his attention, with scarcely less persistence and success, to questions of ethics, economics, and public welfare, as in his essays on *Liberty* (1859) and on *The Subjection of Women* (1869), the latter a plea for the emancipation of women. A similar devotion to public welfare was prominent in the English scientific work of the last part of the century.

England's greatest contribution to science during the century was the fertile thought conceived at practically the same period by ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE and CHARLES DARWIN, and first formulated by Darwin in his *On the Origin of Species* (1859), and later works, that the whole development of life on the planet was due to the modification of heredity by the law of natural selection. This gave impulse to a great movement of research, carried on by groups of scholars throughout the civilised world, which has resulted in an almost complete change in the conception of man's relation to the universe, and which has stimulated, if not transformed, history and psychology and all cognate branches of thought. Most of these scholars have written for the learned public alone, but we must mention several who have served ruth and their country well by popularising, to some

degree, the results of research, — JOHN TYNDALL, a great physicist; THOMAS HUXLEY, who did much to make clear the meaning of evolution and its bearing on ethics and religion; and HERBERT SPENCER, the formulator of a system of philosophy based on the principle of evolution.

CHAPTER X

POETRY FROM THE DEATH OF SCOTT TO THE DEATHS OF TENNYSON AND BROWNING (1832–1892)

167. **Alfred Tennyson.** — In treating the poetry of the period it is necessary only to expand the sketch given in pages 243–49. ALFRED TENNYSON was, in many respects, the most remarkable author of the century in England. From early manhood to extreme old age he put his verse before the public, which at first, following the critics, read him grudgingly and then with increasing approbation, until, from *In Memoriam* (1850) to the *Death of Œnone* (1892), he reached the hearts of the English-speaking race as no man had before him. That he was appreciated so widely was partly due to the influences (pages 250–55) that had created a vast reading public, and had put all parts of it, realising their common humanity, into sympathy with one another; but it is also due to the genius of the singer. His themes were such as had long filled the hearts of all, but had hitherto received no adequate expression. He sang of patriotism, of passionate regret for the beloved dead, of hope and faith in God and man and heaven, of constancy in

love, of noble ideals of purity and honour, of all the struggles that lead us higher. He was master of every form of lyric and narrative verse, combining the melody of Coleridge, the colour of Keats, the story-telling power of Scott, the ethical impulse of Wordsworth. Living aloof from the crowd, he was independent of political or religious creeds, or social coteries, and was thus in his seclusion a poet of pure contemplation, free to reflect in his poems the currents of thought and feeling in his day, without giving them a partisan form. He pleased all classes of the public: the acutely literary by the exquisite finish of his form, no less than by qualities that appealed to the people at large — the melody of his song and the sweep of his blank verse. He became poet-laureate in 1850 by royal command, but he was none the less so by national acclamation.

168. **Robert Browning** was almost the exact contemporary of Tennyson, and throughout a long life devoted himself to poetry with equal earnestness. A man of genius, with great stores of information, a mind of extraordinary acuteness, and a creative imagination of the first rank, he had not the qualities that allowed him to appeal strongly to the great public, which was bewildered by his *Sordello* (1840). It was not until the appearance of *Men and Women* (1855) that he acquired a staunch following of ardent admirers, and not until the publication of *The Ring and the Book* (1868) that he was generally recognized as a great poet. He never became a national favourite, as did Tennyson, but he appealed

with great force to all who loved analysis of character. What stood in the way of Browning's popularity was, in part, his intricate manner of expression, but mainly the fact that, in the field of dramatic monologue, which he made his own, his purpose was to reveal the individuality by reproducing minute processes of thought. His hold on his admirers, now rapidly growing in numbers, is due partly to the rare melody of his verse in certain poems or isolated passages, but mainly to the mighty band of *dramatis personæ*, of all times and nations, but chiefly, perhaps, of mediæval Italy, which he created, — a band equalled only by that of Shakespeare, — and whose inner thoughts he analysed with marvellous reality. He thus satisfied to the full, in the more acute class of readers, the passion which has been one of the great strains of modern thought, — the passion for reproductions in art of the life of typical men and women of the past.

169. **Other Poets.** — Our century, so rich in great poets, was also rich in poets less great. ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, the wife of Robert Browning, was another of the remarkable group of women who have been an essential element in the literature of this period, adding to it qualities which, in kind or in degree, are peculiarly feminine. Mrs. Browning had the woman's heart of spontaneous and undisciplined feeling, — overflowing with pity and indignation, as in her humanitarian protests for the oppressed; or with pure affection, as in her beautiful *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850).

Mention, too, must be made of MACAULAY'S *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). His verses were mechanical, but they had a swing and force that made them favourites with many, particularly the young. MATTHEW ARNOLD and ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (who were both affected deeply by the thought of their time, and remain, to a great extent, poets for scholars, rather than for the people); CHARLES KINGSLEY'S fine ballads and *Andromeda* (1858), his experiment in hexameter; and EDWARD FITZGERALD'S remarkable translation of *Omar Khayyám* (1858), have already been mentioned (pages 247–48). Two strains in our modern poetry remain to be spoken of. The first is that of the writers of *vers de société* and of other forms of light and charming verse, — WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED, CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY, FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON, AUSTIN DOBSON, — whose graceful art and whose influence in widening the scope of English poetry by introducing the *ballade* and other foreign forms of verse it would be churlish not to recognise and appreciate. The second is that of the poets sometimes called pre-Raphaelites, — DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA ROSSETTI, WILLIAM MORRIS, and ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (page 249). Rossetti was a painter of much skill and beauty, and Morris had, in several of the arts, and particularly in the handicrafts, a strong influence in bringing about a better condition of the public taste in household decoration. As artists and as poets the whole group turned for inspiration to the art and poetry of the Middle Ages, before Raphael set

the seal of academic convention on the young Renaissance, when each man in his own art created, with complete naïveté, what seemed beautiful in his own eyes. An Italian by blood and temperament, Rossetti's trend was towards the Italian poetry of the thirteenth century, and especially its worship of beauty and its expression in the sonnet of the ecstasy of contemplative love. Morris loved to retell tales of mediæval and ancient romance, in *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–70), *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876), and his translations of the *Æneid* (1876) and the *Odyssey* (1887). Swinburne turned to many sources, — to the Middle Ages, to the Elizabethans, to the Greeks,— for his inspiration, and, in his *Atalanta in Calydon* (1864) and *Poems and Ballads* (1866), thrilled men by a richness of rhythm and a harmony of sound which were new to English verse, and which have given him a strong influence over younger writers. But all these poets lived apart from the people, dazed by their own worship of vanished ideals, and out of sympathy with modern life. Their school ceases with their own voices, and the elements they contributed to English verse are absorbed, like so many others, in the great current of English poetry.

CHAPTER XI

PROSE LITERATURE IN THE UNITED STATES

170. **The Growth of a New Nation.** — Settlements in the territory that now constitutes the United States were begun very early in the seventeenth century; but it was not until well within the present century that the inhabitants of this land have come to consider themselves wholly as brothers. Nothing could have exceeded in diversity the elements that entered into the process of amalgamation. Along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts there were English, Dutch, German, Swedish, French, Spanish, Scotch, and Irish colonists; and after the struggle for independence was over, and especially after the opportunities existing in the new world became generally known, there have flocked to us, through every open gate, emigrants of all races and from all countries, but particularly from lands where severe governmental rule or harsh economic conditions have driven out the oppressed, the poor, or the ambitious. Diverse as were these elements, however, the process of unification has gone steadily on. By far the majority of the early settlers were English, and, the original colonies belonging to the English crown or soon

falling to it, the English speech became the official and current language. But, though using a single speech and subject to a single rule, it was long before the colonies reached uniformity of sentiment. Drawn together gradually by common interests and mutual intercourse, it was only late in the eighteenth century that they timidly banded together to secure those interests. Carried further than they intended, they achieved independence, and became technically a nation. But even then a genuinely national spirit was, to a large degree, impossible. The states were full of jealousies and antipathies, falling, like the German states of the same period, into little geographical groups. It was not until at least several decades of the nineteenth century had passed that the people of the United States grew to realise fully that they were brothers, and to develop, consciously and unconsciously, the policy and the temperament that were to distinguish them in many ways from their kindred across the sea. Indeed, we may say that it was not until the nation had spread from one ocean to the other, and until the most radical differences between parts of the country had been settled by the great Civil War and the mutual understanding which slowly followed it, that the men of our land have felt that they were bound together by ties which cannot be broken.

171. **The Growth of a New Literature.** — There were several causes which prevented the upgrowing of literature in the United States until the nation had, to some extent, reached consciousness as a nation. First, the time and

strength of the colonists were filled with pressing and often perilous duties. At the outset these were so engrossing that they took away alike the desire to produce literature and the desire to receive it. The life of contemplative leisure, which tends to foster literature, is still rare among us, for even when the more arduous duties of the pioneer were over, the impulse towards a life of activity was strong, as it must always be in a young state, and our best minds turned from the task of clearing a continent to the organising and upbuilding of a great commercial and industrial nation. Second, there were peculiar circumstances in the life of each section of the country that acted as a deterring force. In the southern colonies it was the fact that men lived mainly on plantations, somewhat isolated from their fellows, and that the influence of slavery tended to produce an aristocratic and unprogressive society. The middle colonies lacked the spur of high ideals, and cared more for commerce than for learning and the arts. In New England, on the other hand, where life was more strenuous, the influence of religion was blighting. Puritans of the Puritans, straitest of the sect, they regarded the works of the imagination as sinful, and their abnormal self-analysis and religious narrowness destroyed the element of beauty even in the literature of piety. Third, the ties that bound each colony to the mother country were stronger even than the ties that bound them to one another, and the literature of England satisfied all their needs.

Thus it came about that little writing of merit was done

in America until this century. We have, of course, the writings of such of the early explorers and settlers as were most impressed by the wonders of a virgin world, by their novel adventures, or by a dim vision of what civilisation on this continent might become. But quaint as these are, they can scarcely be counted as the beginnings of American literature. The succeeding generations of writers born on the new soil, the descendants of the pioneers, felt dimly that new thoughts were stirring within them; but in all matters of expression they turned naturally to English models, — to Pope or Addison, — imitating them consciously like unskilled novices. This period of apprenticeship lasted until after the beginning of the nineteenth century, broken only by a few men, to be mentioned later, who were too intent on ideas of great purport to follow any model slavishly. From the time of Irving on, however, we meet new conditions. The reading public was rapidly increasing, and cared more and more for the work of American authors. Beginning with Cooper, Hawthorne, and Emerson, American writers, too, began to look within their own hearts, rather than abroad, both for the matter of which they wrote, and for the manner in which they wrote. The national movement thus begun has grown in strength throughout the country. As generation succeeded generation, we have thought less and less of English models and tended more and more to the natural expression of our own thoughts.

172. **National Elements in American Literature.** — Our literature is thus both dependent and independent, both

a branch and a tree. The colonists came in the age of Shakespeare and Milton, bringing with them the glorious speech of the period and the staunch English temper of mind and body. The language still remains common to both nations, with only the slightest divergencies, due sometimes to the survival here of words or idioms that have now passed out of the British vocabulary, sometimes to changes that have occurred in Great Britain within the last two centuries, and sometimes to similar changes in the United States, — changes which the diverse elements in our population and the rapidly shifting experiences of our people have made peculiarly fitting. The racial traits of the English, especially those most firmly rooted in the Anglo-Saxon stock, have been preserved in America; but they have suffered a sea-change, remaining the same and yet becoming different. Just as it is impossible not to distinguish, as a rule, Americans from Englishmen by their voices, dress, demeanor, habits, and general theory of life, so it is impossible as a rule not to find in American and in English literature of this century somewhat different characteristics. To formulate these national elements in American literature is a difficult task, but we cannot easily err in pointing out three.

First, American literature is in the main addressed to the people at large, rather than to any set or class, and is characterised by plainness and simplicity. It retains much of the savour of the eighteenth century, partly because the social centres in the United States were until recently compact, neighbourly little places, quite like

the London of Queen Anne's day, and partly because the conditions of political and social life long tended to keep the citizen's mind peculiarly alert, as in the little eighteenth-century London, to matters of common interest and welfare. The characteristic American style is thus precisely what we should expect in a democracy: in prose, the plain diction of Emerson, Thoreau, and Lincoln; in poetry, the homely, domestic verse of Longfellow and Whittier. Second, American literature is full of hope and resoluteness. At the close of the nineteenth century the pioneers are still at their task in the extreme West as their ancestors were in the extreme East at the beginning of the seventeenth. The clearing of a continent has taught us self-reliance. Thrown early on our own resources, both as a nation and as individuals, we have held fast to the belief that industry brings happiness, and from first to last, from Franklin to Parkman, it is hard to find in our literature the notes of dread and doubt and despair. Third, American literature has a strong tinge of humour. This is, in fact, a continuation of the old mood of Steele and Swift and Defoe, and the England that laughed with them and was swayed by them, — a mood rather serious than merry, striving to recover a manly balance of thought and action by contemplating typical absurdities of foolishness and prejudice. But it is above all the mood of a democracy, in which the citizens form together a huge family, undivided save by the simplest artificial distinctions, and in which, aware of the frailty of all, we are quick to catch the ludicrous aspect

of life, its incongruities and surprises, the odd simularities between things seemingly diverse, the infinite and whimsical variations of human nature.

173. **Prose before Irving.** — It was in New England, where learning was cherished and the life of the spirit burned most brightly, that American literature first found voice in the works of COTTON MATHER, who was by blood and training a fit representative of the New England hierarchy, for he came of a family of famous clergymen and was himself the most learned and rigorous upholder of the early principles of a church state. He is remembered because of his connection with the Salem witchcraft and by two remarkable works, his *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693) and his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), the history of Christ's church in America. The former is full of vicious superstition, the latter crammed with useless learning, but both are thoroughly typical. To Cotton Mather the New World was the abode of devils, and it was only by fasting and prayer, by single-minded devotion to the letter of the stern Puritan creed, by obedience to the laws of God and the rule of his ministers on earth, that the demon-haunted wilderness could be turned into the saintly paradise for which he yearned. The *Magnalia Christi Americana* is a stout folio, written in the quaint style of the seventeenth century divines, at a moment when the almost absolute power of the church was weakening. It is memorable because it stands as the prose epic of the militant church of the first American century, and because it breathes a

spirit of noble patriotism, not for a country which had as yet no separate existence, but for that high dream of an American theocracy which influenced so potently our subsequent fortunes.

Within half a century from the time at which Mather wrote, gross superstition had vanished from New England, and the church, separated from the state, had withdrawn to its natural functions. But the flame of religious feeling burned more fiercely than ever. JONATHAN EDWARDS believed that men were thronging to hell, where they were to be tortured with fire by the divine vengeance, and his powerful sermons, such as *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, give an impressive expression to this terrible conviction. Edwards himself was a man of pure and exalted character, a Puritan mystic, who desired a heaven of holiness, and who in his youth spent much time, as he wrote, "in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, his contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer." He was, nevertheless, the most acute metaphysician of his day, and influenced profoundly both American and British philosophical thought by his *Modern Prevailing Notions of the Freedom of the Will* (1754), written while he was living as a missionary among the Stockbridge Indians. In a clear, firm style — as different as possible from that of Cotton Mather — he endeavoured logically to establish the extreme doctrine of foreordination, — that man's will is never free, but that, even while seemingly most

unfettered in his choice, he is perforce walking in the path predestined from all eternity.

From the sombre fanaticism of Mather and Edwards, we turn with delight to the cheery good sense of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. He was a New Englander also, the son of a soap-maker, the descendant of a long line of North England blacksmiths; but, by thrift and honest wisdom, he came to be one of the great founders of the Republic, a distinguished man of science, and a benefactor of the people in innumerable ways. He was the incarnation of the robust intelligence and inventive and constructive genius that accomplished our independence, achieved our commercial and industrial prosperity, and has lain at the root of our progress in literature and science. Bewildered at finding so strikingly practical a figure in the land of Mather and Edwards, critics have sometimes declared that Franklin was a typical Englishman of the eighteenth century, and that it is, as it were, only by accident that he was born and bred on this side of the water. But they who speak thus misread the character of New England. Since the landing of the Puritans and the Pilgrims the writing of books had been the privilege of the learned, and the learned wrote of little else than theology. We have only to look below the surface, however, to see that the common people were throughout this long period of silence slowly developing the Yankee traits of mind and temper to which Franklin first gave expression in literature.

Franklin was early familiar with *Pilgrim's Progress* and

the *Spectator*, and he began his literary career by imitations of the latter. He had caught, however, the essential spirit of his models rather than their form, and it was the plain speech of Bunyan and the ease of Addison which showed themselves most clearly in his important works. These consisted chiefly of short articles of many kinds, by which he sought with success to influence public opinion on a variety of subjects. Much that he wrote is still interesting, but his fame as a man of letters is due mainly to his *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1732–48) and his *Autobiography*. Each year the humble little *Almanac* contained a fresh set of Poor Richard's pithy proverbs, in prose or verse, and each year they were pored over, not merely by individuals, but by whole households throughout the land. The *Autobiography*, many times issued in a garbled form, and printed in full only in 1868, has likewise been a permanent favourite with the people, who read with perennial delight the simple but wise tale of the steps by which a humble Yankee boy rose to be second only to Washington in the esteem of his contemporaries.

With Franklin in this early period of our literature must be mentioned the group of noble men who gave their lives to the founding of the state, men who wrote well because they had high thoughts and were labouring for great ideals. Such were GEORGE WASHINGTON, the dignity of whose state papers are the reflection of his own character; THOMAS JEFFERSON, who gave to the *Declaration of Independence* (1775) the sonorous elo-

quence with which it solemnly calls on God and the nations of the world to witness America's proclamation of the inalienable rights of her citizens; ALEXANDER HAMILTON, one of the ablest political thinkers of the time and principal author of the remarkable series of papers on the theory of government that form the *Federalist* (1787–88); and THOMAS PAINE, who was unfortunately best known by his violent deistical writings, but who was the most effective pamphleteer of the Revolution, and by his *Common Sense* (1776) and *The Crisis* (1776–83) gave important support to the American cause.

174. **Irving and Cooper.** — Writing that dealt with aught but spiritual truths or plain facts was frowned upon in New England, and American imaginative literature had its birth in the more liberal Middle States. CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN of Philadelphia is said to have been the first man of letters in America who supported himself by his pen. His six novels belong to the English school contemporary with him and preceding Scott. He delighted in the horrors of death, crime, and pestilence. But it should be noticed that Brown was the first to discover the richness of the field open to American writers of fiction, and to substitute, as in *Edgar Huntley* (1801), "the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness" for the puerile terrors of Mrs. Radcliffe and the *Castle of Otranto*.

It was in the fertile field of native romance that American literature won its earliest successes, a few years later, in the tales of WASHINGTON IRVING and the novels

of JAMES FENIMORE COOPER. Irving was by nature akin to Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith. He loved their kindly, contemplative, whimsical mood, and his work is a continuation of theirs without being in any sense an imitation of it. Irving first became known through his burlesque chronicle of the Dutch New Amsterdam, *Knickerbocker's History of New York* (1809), a mock-heroic parody of a now forgotten volume of local history. His *Sketch Book* (1820), *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), which were the first American books read in England, showed, at the beginning of his career, the two kinds of material of which he was master. In the sketches dealing with an English Christmas he continued, so to speak, the Sir Roger de Coverley papers, writing from the point of view, not of the native Englishman, but of his trans-Atlantic cousin; in the story of *Rip Van Winkle* he took up the legends that clustered around the river of his boyhood. In the *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), and in other volumes, he continued to treat these two diverse subjects, and to them, led by his long residence on the continent of Europe and especially in Spain, he added the Spanish legend. Irving thus revealed to Americans the charm of the Old and — what was of even greater service — the charm of the New World. His richest vein was that of the romantic tale tinged with humour, and it is clear that his temperament, which united a love of humour with a love of romance, allowed him to combine the best qualities of the eighteenth century essayist with those of the story-tellers of his own time.

Irving discovered for us the picturesque treasures of native scenery and of Dutch colonial life; Cooper, the romance of the virgin wilderness and of the American revolution. He was not by instinct a man of letters. He had not the breadth and urbanity of nature which Irving possessed, and he had not Irving's grace of style. But he had the gift of story-telling; and he was so fortunate as to have seen, in part, a side of American life that was of permanent interest to the world, — the titanic strife on the westward-moving borders between the pioneer and the Indian. He grew towards middle age without a thought of authorship, when chance led him to novel-writing. *The Spy* (1821), dealing with the American Revolution, was followed by a rapid succession of remarkable tales of adventure by land and sea. Of these the most famous are *The Pilot* (1823), of which John Paul Jones is the hero, and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), the best of the Leatherstocking tales. In general, it may be said that Scott was Cooper's model; but Scott merely pointed out the way. Each turned with genuine delight to the romance of his own soil. Scott wrote of knights and pretenders, of frays and tournaments and dungeons; Cooper, of trappers and braves, of wild expeditions, of the scalping-knife and the stake. And America and Europe read — and reads — the Waverley novels and the Leatherstocking tales with equal joy. Cooper's novels of the sea are scarcely less prized, for they are the fruit of actual knowledge of nautical affairs; but his greatest contribution to fiction lay in the few great

figures of pioneer life, — Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas, which he created, and which must stand in literature as permanent types.

175. **Poe and Hawthorne.** — EDGAR ALLAN POE and NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE had much in common. They were as unlike the energetic and resolute Scott and Cooper as were Keats and Shelley, and, like the latter, they were supersensitive, ethereal, enamoured of the allegorical and the ideal.

Poe's physique conditioned his art. His intellect was extraordinarily clear and brilliant, delighting in intricate problems; but his nervous system was so morbidly excitable that he was a prey to despair and gloom, and his mind was preoccupied by thoughts of death, the grave, and all that is ghastly and horrible. From this curious conjunction of qualities came the power of his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) and his other stories. Sometimes, as in *The Gold Bug*, Poe applied his marvellous skill as an analyst to a mere cryptogram; sometimes, as in the famous *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, to tracing out, with the same inexorable logic, the perpetrator of a crime; sometimes, as in *Hans Pfaal*, to the construction of a hoax; but more often, as in *Ligeia*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, and *The Fall of the House of Usher*, to producing by degrees on the reader the effect of utter terror, but terror so refined by the beauty of the style as to have become a pleasure. In this strange power he has never been surpassed.

Hawthorne was a New Englander and came of a typi-

cal family of Salem sea captains — seafarers from father to son, — the descendants of a judge in the Salem witch trials. In Hawthorne all the inherited activities were turned inwards. Living for years in extreme seclusion in the quiet little seaport of Salem, writing by day and walking on the beach by night, he brooded over the shapes his fancy fashioned, and particularly over the figures from the Puritan past that had trodden less than two centuries before where his feet then trod. His *Twice-Told Tales* (1837, 1842) and *Scarlet Letter* (1850) were historical romances as much as those of Cooper, but in a different sense. Hawthorne's interest lies not in a plot of adventure but in the analysis of moral impulses, of temperament and character, of the essential qualities, indeed, of Puritan life. No one portrayed better than he its picturesque elements, — the little town hemmed in by the forest, the quaint garb and speech, the medley of religion and superstition. But it was the life of the spirit with which he was preoccupied, and, as in the *Marble Faun* (1860), the tendency is always toward the allegorical, as if he would say, "Thus lives the soul of man, and these are the crises through which it passes, whether today, or centuries ago, whether in the Old World or the New." Hawthorne's mind was not morbid, and his style has lurking within it an element of the humorous and the grotesque, which tempers the sombreness of the tragic and heightens the effect of his quiet mirth.

176. **The Novel after Hawthorne.** — Mention must also be made of Mrs. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin (1852), a novel which has probably had a larger circulation than any other book of the century, and of which Lincoln said, only half in jest, that it had brought about the Civil War. Mrs. Stowe wrote many other books, some of which give quaint pictures of rural life in New England, but none of them equalled her romance of slavery, which was translated into many tongues and read everywhere by the poor and oppressed, as well as by all who sympathised with them. It owed its extraordinary power, not to graces of style or peculiar skill in narrative, — though the author possessed such skill to a considerable degree, — but to the fact that the subject involved was then burning in the hearts of men, and to the fact that, as no one had foreseen, the strongest possible arguments against slavery were not those derived from the Constitution or from any theory as to the abstract rights of man, but the elemental feelings aroused by this artless tale of a country clergyman's wife, who, busied with her housework and her babies, had yet time to brood over the wrongs done by law to the helpless and the innocent.

Poe died in 1849, Cooper in 1851, Irving in 1859, Hawthorne in 1864. When the Civil War was over and there was again a surplus of energy to devote to fiction, the last of the earlier generation of story-tellers in America had passed away. Slowly there grew up a new generation, but it had other subjects and other ways. The effect of the war had been to break down in many ways the barriers to complete understanding and sympathy between different parts of the country, and to allow us to

form stronger ties of association with other nations. The bitter experience of the tragedy of national and individual life gained through the great conflict had swept away many national and local absurdities, and brought us into the full current of modern thought and feeling. The results of this clarifying process were two: we gained interest in ourselves, and we were in a position to appreciate the contemporary movements of European thought. Up to 1870 no one had written well of modern American life. Cooper had confined himself largely to colonial and revolutionary times, Hawthorne and Poe lived in a world of dreams. But from the *Luck of Roaring Camp* (1870) in which FRANCIS BRET HARTE depicted, somewhat after the manner of Dickens, the rough but sterling characters of the extreme West, to the end of the century, the trend of fiction was towards the portrayal of characters distinctive of special parts of the country, scarcely any section of which is not now well represented in current literature. Though romance has happily not died out from American life or American fiction, there has also been a strong trend towards realism in fiction, the leaders in this movement, WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS and HENRY JAMES, following, with important variations, the general method of the strong European school, from which England has to a great degree held herself aloof (page 265). It is also interesting to notice the prominent part played in the literature of this period by the short story, which, from Poe and Hawthorne on, has been a favourite with American authors, and which has proved

an excellent vehicle for the studies of local character, towards which, as has just been said, prose fiction so strongly tended.

177. **Statesmen.** — A democratic government is by nature prolific in political orators, who arouse the people to the appreciation of whatever is essential in matters under public discussion, and who, addressing large and representative audiences, and taking for their themes national issues, are themselves incited to their fullest powers by the magnitude of the interests involved, and the fact that they stand face to face with those to whom they appeal, and do not address the impersonal reader through the medium of the printed page. In the United States, the period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War was especially rich in such orators, particularly in the Senate, where for forty years debate centred on the most vital questions, affecting the unity and welfare of the young republic. Of these statesmen the greatest was DANIEL WEBSTER, whose penetrating intellect, magnificent voice, grand presence, sincere devotion to the cause of national unity, and extraordinary power of marshalling facts and principles so as to produce conviction, have caused him to be ranked among the great orators of the world, and made him one of the strongest forces in that slow process by which the inhabitants of many federated states came to feel themselves one nation.

The work of ABRAHAM LINCOLN began as that of Webster closed, and it has become plain that the work of both was part of the same great task of awakening a nation.

Great minds, like those of Hamilton and Webster, had long held forth the idea of complete national unity. With Hamilton the idea was a political abstraction. Webster was the voice that taught the concept to the people. Lincoln, born of the very heart of the people, self-taught, and growing spontaneously towards the right, was the token that the mass of the people had unconsciously made that concept their own, and became the great instrument by which that concept became realised. A less powerful orator than Webster, who spoke after the fashion of Demosthenes and Cicero, he uttered his plain thoughts only in the homely speech of the people. Not much of what he said and wrote belongs to literature, but those few words, as in the *Address at Gettysburg* (1863) and the *Second Inaugural Address* (1865), sank into the hearts of men, for he spoke in the name of the nation and as its good genius.

178. **Historians.** — The first American historian who was also a man of letters was undoubtedly Cotton Mather, whose conception of the *Magnalia Christi Americana* was that it should record all that was essential in the history of the church, which was to him what our country is to us. But it was destined that more than a century and a half should pass before a writer of equal power should attempt to deal with any important part of our history. We may except Irving's biographies of Columbus and Washington, works of solid merit, whose real value has been obscured by their author's reputation as a writer of stories. But Irving was not a historian of the

first rank, and WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT and JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY, who were, chose foreign themes. Prescott was fascinated by the romance of Spanish discovery. His *Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and *Conquest of Peru* (1847) were the result of elaborate and painstaking research, a task made more onerous by the fact that he was nearly blind. The entrancing theme and his firm but somewhat cold style made his works widely read, and it is to be regretted that the science of archæology was then so little advanced as to allow him to form an altogether false conception of the primitive people of whom he wrote. Motley, equally attracted by Spanish history, chose for a theme the struggle with the Netherlands and the establishment there of a democratic government, — a subject which he investigated with equal thoroughness, and treated, in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856) and *History of the United Netherlands* (1861–68), in a noble and impassioned style, and with sympathy for the cause of political and religious freedom. FRANCIS PARKMAN, superior to both as a historian and a man of letters, chose the struggle between France and England for supremacy in the New World, — an epic theme, which, though partly disabled by ill health, he treated in full in a series of works, beginning with the *Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851) and closing with *A Half-Century of Conflict* (1892). Parkman's mastery of his subject was complete, and his style, — clear, pure, supple, and brilliant, — though less sonorous than that of Gibbon, has not been surpassed by that of any historian. The

history of the United States has been attempted, in whole or in part, by many excellent writers, among whom should be mentioned GEORGE BANCROFT, and has been made the subject of much detailed research, but no one has yet treated it in such a fashion that his work has become literature.

179. **The New England Group of Essayists.** — As we have said, it was in New England that the life of the intellect and of the spirit was the most intense in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The same statement holds true of the nineteenth century, up to, at least, the time of the Civil War. The Puritan inheritance was a remarkable one. On generation after generation it had impressed the immense importance of the soul and its relation to a personal God, thereby awakening to an extraordinary degree the consciousness of the individual. It had, moreover, kept the eyes of man open to the mysterious side of existence, teaching him to watch for manifestations of God and the devil. On the other hand, the narrowness and bigotry of the sect had sealed all the æsthetic senses of man, forcing him to fix his attention alone upon his own sins and the just anger of an avenging God, and rendering greater his torments on earth by teaching, explicitly or implicitly, that his doom or his pardon had been predestined from all eternity. As time passed by, this grim conception of life became modified. The New England colleges had gone steadily on with their work of education. More important still, the common sense of the people awoke, touching life with humour

and sagacity. Beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century, there arose what might be called a humanistic or humanitarian movement, both within and without the church, which insisted less on man's innate moral depravity and more on his power, in many ways, to lay himself open to spiritual influences, and by high resolve and earnest effort to make himself and the world better. Cutting itself adrift from the church sometimes, the movement showed itself in strange and transient sects and in wild schemes for the better organization of society, and produced swarms of fanatic reformers. It was also closely associated with political and literary movements. It was the mother of abolitionism, and it led directly to the transcendental theories that were the basis of Emerson's philosophy. Slowly the reticent New England mind, so cold and grim, so closed to aught but God, opened also to man, and the result was, for half a century, an outpouring of the heart in prose and song that constitutes the major part of American literature. Of the writers we have mentioned, Webster, Hawthorne, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman were New Englanders, and of those whom we have still to mention, Emerson, Thoreau, Holmes, Lowell, Bryant, Longfellow, and Whittier. Most of them, too, came of Massachusetts stock, and are associated with the north-eastern part of that state, where the Puritan civilisation put out its deepest roots, and where the humanitarian movement found its chief seat.

The humanitarian movement may then be in general defined as an awakening to a sense of human relations.

In this literary and philosophical movement the chief figure for many years was RALPH WALDO EMERSON, who combined the two strains of New England thought represented by Cotton Mather and by Franklin. For two centuries one group of minds had been mystics, and another the incarnation of common sense; one stood for the priesthood, the other for the people. Emerson's fathers had long been clergymen, and he began his career by preaching. His mind instinctively turned to the unseen. His philosophy, best expressed perhaps in *Nature* (1836), was that of the German idealists, — that all visible is but a form of the spirit, a manifestation of God; that man himself is another division of that same spirit, having knowledge of God, its source, through innate ideas. But though his thought ran at times to the extreme of mysticism, it had that singular characteristic which we find in Franklin and in Lincoln, and which makes us feel them American. He loved simple things and ways and people. He saw into the hearts of men with eyes not distorted by erudition or dogma, and read there the essential elements of human action. More like Montaigne than any other European author, he loved to be the voice of wisdom and to utter in the homeliest manner the most vital truths. He lectured much and wrote much, influencing men strongly in both ways. His *Essays* (1841, 1844), *Representative Men* (1850), and *Conduct of Life* (1860), were great forces in awakening the people, for, whatever subject he treated, he preached freedom of thought, nobility of mind, and high resolution.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Emerson's friend and fellow-townsman, published only two books during his lifetime, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1848), and *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), though since his death several other volumes have been compiled from his papers. Thoreau was a man of education, but he preferred to support himself by the work of his own hands. He was an expert pencil-maker, an excellent surveyor, and by the intermittent exercise of these employments, as well as by farm labour, he earned enough for his simple needs. Much of his time was spent in the open air, either in the woods and fields about his native place, or in occasional longer journeys through New England. His ruling passions were his deep and constant delight in nature and his love of simplicity and independence. Both passions were most completely and naturally gratified when he passed more than two years in a little hut which he built by Walden pond near Concord, tilling a small plot of ground, and depending for sustenance and for enjoyment almost entirely on his own resources. His books are the reflection of a singularly quiet and beautiful character, self-poised and self-controlled like that of a stoic, but full of a sympathy with nature that became at times almost mystic. No one has known nature in New England better than he, or approached him in the description of it, or given better expression to the type of New England feeling that finds content and high thoughts in a quiet and simple country life.

Few contrasts can be greater than that between Emer-

son and Thoreau, with their gentle and thoughtful country ways, and OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, long professor of anatomy at the Harvard Medical School in Boston. Holmes said jestingly of his city that it was the hub of the solar universe, but it is plain that in his heart he felt this to be true, for neither his subjects nor his sympathies often allow him to stray far beyond the city borders. His genius had in it no touch of the mystic; he was not greatly impressed by nature; he did not love solitude; his social and professional connections held him aloof from the common folk; he was essentially an aristocrat. But his intellect, if little touched by the imagination, was keen, and his wit brilliant; and he was a shrewd observer of human nature. Of his verse we shall speak later; it was by his prose that he caught the ear of the people. In the first volume of the *Atlantic Monthly*, destined to contain for a period so much of the best in American literature, appeared his *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858), and this was followed by *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1860), and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1872). They are essay-novels, and begin quite after the fashion of *Tristram Shandy*. The novel element, though slight, is worth taking account of, in that it is so complete a foil to the work of Hawthorne. Holmes takes the types of a Boston boarding-house as his characters. He throws no veil of glamour over them, as Hawthorne would have done, but judges them as a physician might, with an accurate knowledge of their physical and mental peculiarities. The shrewd estimates of people,

the pretty little romances he imagines about them — as a man might imagine such things for his own amusement — pleased everyone; and everyone was also pleased by the essay elements, the wise and witty opinions of men and things, the humour, the pathos, the fashion all his own, in which, as it were, he turned inside out the garment of life, allowing men to smile at the oddities revealed, but showing them also, by this whimsical method, something more of its true shape than they would otherwise have known.

Most of the writers whom we have mentioned in this chapter were graduated from Harvard College, which in the first half of the century performed a unique service in firing the ambition of young men in letters at the same time that she trained their judgment and moulded their taste. GEORGE TICKNOR, the historian of Spanish literature, held the famous professorship of belles-lettres from 1820 to 1835, and was succeeded by Longfellow, and he in his turn, in 1855, by JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, who, like his predecessor, was already a poet, and who was also to become the first critic in the land. Lowell had many accomplishments. He had a wide knowledge of the romance languages and literatures, and of English prose and poetry. He was for years editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and of the *North American Review*, and he served as ambassador both to Spain and to England. But his most conspicuous service to his country and to literature were his critical essays, which deal almost invariably with great literature and are the fruit of long

reading and study. Lowell had a genius for criticism. His style was rich and buoyant, abounding in happy fancies and striking turns of expression. Less dogmatic than Arnold, and less occupied with the foundation of a critical method, he wrote with more enthusiasm as well as with greater knowledge. With all his interest in foreign literature, a sound knowledge of which he did much to make possible in America, he was a lover of his own country and our own letters. He was of the stock that made New England, and he never lost his deep affection for her peculiar characteristics, her idiosyncrasies of language and temper, and the great principles which she has done so much to establish in American life.

The chapter would be incomplete were we to omit mention of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, — better known under his pseudonym, MARK TWAIN, whose works have perhaps been more widely read than those of any other English author of this century. He may be classed as a novelist. *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and its sequels, as well as other stories, are, apart from their ludicrous side, of great value as fiction, for they portray with great vividness and accuracy phases of American life before the Civil War, particularly in the Mississippi valley. But his wide fame is chiefly due to his *Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), and *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), which not only provoked hearty laughter but served also to mould the thought of the nation. Beneath all his extravagance and whimsicality

of statement, beneath apparent irreverence and (sometimes) even coarseness, there lurks a serious and a high motive. Mark Twain, like Franklin and Lincoln, came of the people, and he represents, in much the same way that Lincoln did, the mass of the people, — their native ideals, their real temper, their impatience of mere learning and mere convention and mere fancy. And so his own laughter was echoed by theirs whenever he touched on vital questions of character and conduct, showing, for example, as he did in *Innocents Abroad*, the foolishness of that form of European travel that cultivates affectation, mock appreciation, and the worship of the mere accidents of antiquity, which civilisation has long justly discarded. A deadly foe of sham and cant in all their forms, strong in his sanity and in his reliance upon the beliefs and principles of the people, he has been as brave a soldier for the cause of humanity as was Heine.

CHAPTER XII

POETRY IN THE UNITED STATES

180. **Prose** rather than poetry has been the natural form of expression in American literature, — a form wholly consonant with our national mood, that of clear-headed, well-ordered aspiration. The part of literature which we call poetry is great in importance, but very limited in its field. Only ideas of certain sorts can be expressed by it. Its production is dependent, to a large degree, on a state of society in which an author is free to live a life of resolute leisure like that of Tennyson or Shelley, free from all that would divert his fancy or his imagination from communion with his dreamlike ideals. Such opportunities the American social system rarely furnishes. Our thoughts have been of necessity immediately concerned with the present, — with what has been done, with what must now be done. Prose is, therefore, our characteristic language, — the language of debate, and discussion, and explanation, the language of the orator, the statesman, the historian, the critic, the novelist.

It must not be forgotten, however, that there are three elements in American life that have had a great influence

in moulding the national character, and which have, to some degree, given to our poetry traits peculiarly American. These are, first, the influence of American scenery, so wild, so dominating, so long free from the touch of man; second, the religious influence of the forms of dissenting Christianity most wide-spread among us, all of which have tended to awaken an intense interest in the inner life, the life of the soul, with its subtle hopes and fears, with its tenderness of conscience, its sympathy with human frailty, its reliance on the unseen; third, the pervading influence of a well-assimilated democracy, in which there was long little difference in comfort, education, and refinement between the rich and the poor, the great and the humble, and where each individual and each household knew the joys of homely living. These elements the attentive student will find running throughout American verse. Unlike the prose of our century, it has not been in volume and value comparable with that produced by some other great nations, and particularly by England, but it has yet had its modest glories.

181. **Early American Verse.** — There is little early American verse worth mentioning. Between the landing of the Pilgrims and Bryant's *Thanatopsis* (1817) there had passed two centuries in which no melodious voice was heard. Religion had stifled poetry; the trend of life had been away from it. If we had been a primitive race we might have had our epics and ballads; but we were too old for these, and too young, too distracted by toil,

to sing in a new fashion of a new life. What verse there was followed European models, — feeble imitations, in the seventeenth century, of Donne and Quarles and Du Bartas; and, in the eighteenth, of Butler and Pope. The first sign of quickening spirit was the swarm of political and satirical ballads in Revolutionary times, of which survives only the rollicking tune and bantering words of *Yankee Doodle*. After the establishment of the Republic, we have, in addition, a few poems endeared to us by tradition as the first lispings of patriotic verse, *Hail Columbia* (1798) and the *Star Spangled Banner* (1814). Then came more ambitious, but still artless attempts to sing of New World stuff, such as those made by PHILIP FRENEAU, who, before Cooper, saw the romance of the Indian, of whom his fathers had thought only as a dangerous beast; or by JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE, who wrote the *American Flag*, the best piece of patriotic verse in the early century, and the *Culprit Fay* (1835), in which the birds and beasts and flowers of our own land begin to appear in our poetry; or by his friend, FITZ-GREENE HALLECK, who wrote so tenderly of his death. Nor must we omit mention of JOHN HOWARD PAYNE, whose *Home, Sweet Home* (1823) touched deeply the hearts of a land where men migrate so freely.

181*a*. **Bryant.** — American poetry, however, begins with William Cullen Bryant. Born in 1794, in the Berkshire highlands, he shared as a boy in the austere life of early New England, where, though few knew want, every farmer's boy was hardened to fatigue and cold, and

taught stern lessons of frugality by tasks that bred resoluteness and self-control. The terrors of inexorable foreordination and punishment were ceasing somewhat to haunt men's minds, but there was little innocent mirth and spontaneous joy. Life was work, and work against odds. Bryant spent the years of his manhood in New York, where he became a distinguished journalist, but his best verse, *Thanatopsis*, *To a Water-Fowl*, *The Death of the Flowers*, was either written in his boyhood or is wholly removed in spirit from his later urban life. It breathes a high spirit of austerity and stoic resignation, and is the song of men who, escaped from the haunting terrors of superstition, look anew on nature, and see in it only what is cold and dark and silent — the stern, unsetting stars, the silent beauty of the wilderness, the desolate sea, but are still "sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust."

182. **Longfellow and Whittier.** — The best-known name in American poetry is that of HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, whose first experiments in verse were published as early as 1826. His ambition from boyhood was to enter the then entirely unprofitable field of literature, but his interests were fortunately in part those of the student and teacher. His work as instructor in modern languages at Bowdoin College attracted attention, and after several years of study and travel abroad he succeeded George Ticknor in the now famous professorship of belles-lettres at Harvard College. Longfellow's work as a teacher was of great service to the cause of letters in America, for no one in his time did more to diffuse the

knowledge and appreciation of what was best in European literature. As a poet, a part of his influence lay along the same lines. He translated much foreign verse, always with grace and fidelity, setting the seal on his labours by his memorable rendering of the *Divine Comedy* (1867). But his influence was greater than that of a translator. The *Golden Legend* (1851) and almost numberless minor pieces, bred of his own fancy or based on foreign originals, reproduced the inner spirit of mediæval times, — at least on its gentler side, — the glamour and romance alike of southern climes and of the north. A close student of European literature and sensitive to literary movements, he conceived in his apprentice days the idea of creating new forms in American literature, by applying to native material the methods already common elsewhere. The idea was a natural one and the execution was admirable. His two early attempts at native ballads, *The Skeleton in Armor* and *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, were entirely successful, and his later attempts at the pastoral and the epic — *Evangeline* (1847), after the manner of Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea*, and *Hiawatha* (1855), in the metre of the Finnish *Kalevala*, — were not only immensely popular, serving their purpose in awakening the country to the romance of its own soil, but must remain permanent monuments of our literature. Though Longfellow was a master pioneer in this way, he was most loved by the people for the gentle moralising of his verse. A kindly man, devoted to his work and to his family and

friends, he cared little for the great contemporary movements in thought and politics. He loved the outward aspects of nature, without passion or mysticism, and drew from them, with the quaintness of the early German romanticists, little lessons, as in *The Rainy Day*. He was not a great thinker, and his work, like his life, held aloof from great or intricate problems; but he sang sweetly and gently, his heart was pure, his sympathy strong, and he lived a simple life. He was the first to reveal to us the magic of foreign poetry and to show us that American subjects had as much romance as those of Europe. He appealed to the young and old, to men and women, and he was the greatest household poet of the century.

An almost exact contemporary of Longfellow was JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, born in 1807, in Haverhill, Massachusetts, of a family that had been permanently settled in that vicinity since the early days of the seventeenth century. His early life was that of the ordinary farmer's lad, full of labour and hardship, and free from affectation. His formal education was slight, but he knew men and good books, and his skill as a rhymster and his interest in public affairs led him into journalism and politics. By 1832 he had won a name for himself in both fields, and seemed likely to represent his district in Congress, but his delicate health forced him to give up his ambitions in ither direction, and he retired to his native county, where spent, with slight exceptions, the remainder of his ıg life. Whittier was first known by his political verse.

A Quaker, with the spirit of a reformer, he early joined the anti-slavery party, and became one of the leading abolitionists, and certainly the great poet of the movement. His verses were efficacious in moulding the opinions of all ranks of society in the North and West, from the President and his Cabinet to the lowest soldier or tax-payer; but they were instruments in a transient struggle, the product of discord and sectional feeling, and cannot perhaps be expected to remain permanently in the national memory.

Whittier's religious verse is much more national in character. His Quaker tolerance, his life of moral earnestness, his gentle, unspotted character, and his simple way of taking the world, made him a fitting spokesman in verse of the more liberal religious feeling of the day. It is, however, by his verses on country life, as in *Snow-Bound* (1866) and *The Tent on the Beach* (1867), rather than by his political or religious poetry, that Whittier will be remembered. A bachelor and an invalid, not bound by the ties that commonly blind men to wider thoughts than society and ambition, following pursuits that gave ample leisure for meditation, he lived, with Quaker and Puritan frugality, a life full of reminiscence of boyhood days and of the country ways that had never ceased to be his. And this reminiscence and this sympathy became the voice of a whole multitude, East and West, that still toiled in the fields, or turned gladly back in spirit from city counting-houses to the orchards and brooks of their early years. Without Longfellow's learning and cultiva-

tion, he rivalled him too on his own field, reviving incidents of early New England life after a less bookish fashion, and one truer alike to the facts and to the temper of the time, in ballads that are among the best in modern English literature.

183. **Emerson, Holmes, and Lowell.** — Longfellow was closely connected with the group of New England prose-writers described in the preceding chapter; Whittier, owing to his country life and retiring habits, stood somewhat outside of it. Hawthorne and Thoreau were not poets; but EMERSON, HOLMES, and LOWELL, the three remaining figures in what might be called the Boston or Cambridge school, were poets as well as prose-writers, though their fame in the former field is not so great as in the latter.

In prose, EMERSON'S glory was that by his noble philosophy he thrilled the young and earnest with the desire to live lives self-controlled, self-reliant, hopeful, simple; and his voice was the first in America to rouse such enthusiasm in the hearts of the aspiring, and to teach such noble lessons. In verse Emerson's influence was not different. Indeed, poetry and prose seemed to him closely akin. His imagination once kindled and finding vent in words, it was merely a matter of throwing them into groups of one kind or another, or of so altering them at times that they fell into a simple rhythm or made simple rhymes or assonances. His ear was not keen in either respect, and it is said that at times he scarcely knew whether what he had written was prose or verse.

Yet such was the naked power of his imagination that, as in the case of the Hebrew poets, we find a simple art the fitting medium for thoughts of singular simplicity and remarkable power. The thought of the essays is in large measure that of the poems, which are mainly gnomic or didactic, the sage's aphorisms, pregnant with deep suggestion, as in his mystical and beautiful *Brahma*. Sometimes, however, he undertook historical subjects, as in the famous *Concord Hymn*, or was moved to give utterance to the emotion caused by his own personal experience, as in the most touching of his poems, *It is Time to Be Old* and the *Threnody*. But his best-known work has perhaps been his nature poems, — *The Humble-Bee*, *Monadnock*, and *The Snow-storm*, — where his art is more like that of Whittier, and stamps them both as men who had seen nature face to face, with the eyes of simple humanity, and not through library windows.

HOLMES was the city member of the little group, and his verse has the urban qualities that remind us of Pope and Queen Anne's London. He was only about twenty when his spirited lines on the proposed destruction of the old frigate *Constitution* (1830) were on everyone's lips. His first volume of poems (1836) showed the qualities that remained his throughout life. He had the gift of broad and farcical humour, the more delicate art of wit, and a vein of genuine pathos and serious thought, — the last at its best in the *Last Leaf* and the *Chambered Nautilus*. But it was wit, — the pun, the sparkling jest, the neatly turned and salient thought, — that made him the

favourite poet at public or private gatherings in his native state; and though little of his verse on trivial topics and occasions now no longer memorable can ultimately survive, it is astonishing how much of it retains its interest. He was less an imitator of Pope than a belated member of Pope's own school, with equal wit and skill in epigram, and a power over Pope's favourite metre that has not been equalled except by Pope.

Like Holmes, LOWELL was a wit, and it was by clever satire and humorous criticism that he first won favour in his *Biglow Papers* (1848 and 1867) and his *Fable for Critics* (1848). He differs from Holmes, however, in that his talent is that of the brilliant improvisatore rather than that of the somewhat mechanical artist, and that he dealt with larger subjects. Holmes had an eighteenth century heart, tolerant and kindly, but at bottom coldly observant of human nature and incapable of devotion to a cause. Lowell was made in a later and larger mould. His heart was set on the welfare of his country, and so, scholar and Yankee that he was, he gave his political satire the flavour of rustic speech and jest, as only one could do who was learned in antiquarian lore and bred in the stronghold of the New England spirit. His best serious verse was *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (1848), a mediæval tale, in the manner of Longfellow, with a prelude and interlude which are accurately descriptive of nature in New England, and the noble *Commemoration Ode* (1865).

184. **Poe.** — We now leave the New England school of poets, passing to POE, who was the only writer outside

of New England who was contemporary with them, and to later poets. Poe published thin volumes in 1827, 1829, and 1831, containing, at least in germ, many of his best poems; and his last volume of collected verse appeared in 1845. It must therefore be kept in mind that he wrote before any of the preceding writers, except Bryant, had done work that would justify their present reputation. Poe had closer affinities with Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats than had any other American poet, and is our solitary figure on that side of the romantic school. He abhorred didacticism in verse, and loved the form of poetry which by rhythm and melody appeals exclusively to the imagination. What he wrote was short, exquisite in form, and ethereal in matter, the artistic expression of moods that are allied to madness,— moods in which death conquers all, and ghosts and demons and evil harbingers are on every hand. This unreal world he sung in a melody more piercingly sweet, more haunting, more mystically sad and terrible than that of any other American poet, and the peculiarities of his genius and of his art have caused him rightly to be hailed, in his limited field of pure fancy, as the greatest that has arisen among us.

185. **Whitman and Later Poets.** — Emerson had declared that men must look into their own hearts and on nature for inspiration and solace, and that Americans must find the stimulus for their own literature in their own national and personal experiences. As if in response to his call and his example, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Whittier were doing, in the sixth decade of the century,

their most characteristic work; and in the same decade appeared a thin volume entitled *Leaves of Grass* (1855), by WALT WHITMAN. This, with succeeding productions of the same character, have been much read, and, especially in Europe, have been thought typical of the ideas of a great democracy. Whitman's manner was that of the rhapsodist, who, deeply moved and despising convention, uttered his thought in language depending largely for its effect on its irregular rhythm, usually without the aid of rhyme. Like Whittier, and with him almost alone among our poets, Whitman knew the life of the people. But it was the old New England farming folk with which Whittier was familiar. Whitman knew the humbler city folk, — firemen and drivers and mechanics, more typical even than farmers of the men whose political judgment or caprice determines the destinies of our municipalities or the nation. These men, as symbols of democracy, he idolised, seeing in them the nobility of active and healthy life. He felt himself their brother, the type of the race. He sang of them, of his joy in comradeship with them, of their wondrous diversity of toil, of a commonwealth based on honest living and plain thinking, of the joy of mere physical existence, of the great panorama of nature spread before us, of national ideals, of our heroes. His song was full of uncouth words and rough thoughts, and not free from affectation, and the people of whom he wrote have not understood him; but others have, and the grandeur of his conception and the majestic sweep of his verse entitle him to a place among our poets.

Poe died young, in 1849, but the other poets mentioned in this chapter lived singularly long and happy lives. Even the venerable Bryant lived until 1878; Longfellow and Emerson, until 1882; Lowell, until 1891; Whittier and Whitman, until 1892; and Holmes, until 1894. The men who began American poetry have, then, survived almost until the end of the century. Of these men, the New England poets formed a group by themselves, whose tendencies and habits of thought give our verse its chief characteristics, namely, simplicity and a love for the didactic. In the first respect they differ greatly from the contemporary English school, who, from Keats to Tennyson, have depended to a large degree on the exquisite finish which they gave to their verse. In the second respect, the American school followed the lead of Wordsworth.

Whitman may, on the whole, be regarded as a member of the New England school in spirit, and as merely pushing to an extreme the methods of Emerson and Thoreau, though it must be confessed that it is easier to put him in a class by himself. At all events, he has had no prominent disciples, and his influence, wherever felt, has served merely to add to the simplicity of our verse and its disregard of the more intricate conventions of form. Poe's influence, on the contrary, has led towards greater care for form and interest in the craftsman's side of poetry. The influence of the school of the Pre-Raphaelites, which would have worked in the same direction, has scarcely been felt in America. Since the Civil War only

two tendencies have been distinguishable in our poetry. The first is parallel to the tendency noted in the novel and short story (see page 297), namely, towards verse dealing with the humours and peculiarities of life in certain localities, usually in dialect, the best example of which is perhaps to be found in the poems of BRET HARTE. The other is that towards craftsmanship, best shown in the verse of SIDNEY LANIER, poet and musician, the intricate melody and charm of whose lyrics and odes make him the only other poet of the century whom it would be appropriate to mention here.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.		
449	. . . .	English History begins in Britain. The Jutes land in Thanet.
597	. . . .	Christianity brought into England by Augustine;
627	. . . .	And into Northumbria by Paulinus.
635, *et seq.*	.	The Celtic Missionaries evangelise Northumbria.
664	. . . .	The Synod of Whitby.
670–80	. .	The poems of Cædmon.
669–71	. .	School of Canterbury; Archbishop Theodore. } Wessex.
680?–709	. .	The literary work of Ealdhelm. (Born 656.) } Wessex.
690 (cir.)	.	The laws of Ine. } Wessex.
674–82	. .	Wearmouth, Jarrow, and their libraries, founded by Benedict Biscop.
673	. . . .	Bæda, Benedict's scholar, born.
731	. . . .	Bæda's Ecclesiastical History. (Death of Bæda, 735.)
735	. . . .	Ecgberht, Archbp. of York, establishes the School of York and the Library. (Died 766.)
766–82	. .	Æthelbert and Alcuin make York the centre of European learning.
782–92	. .	Alcuin carries the learning of York to Europe.
793	. . . .	The first Viking raid on Northumbria.
		Cynewulf (born about 720) wrote his poems probably in the latter half of this century.
800	. . . .	Charles the Great crowned emperor.
830	. . . .	About this date the "Heliand," an Old Saxon poem, was written.

A.D.

867–76 . . The final destruction of the seats of learning in Northumbria by "the Army."

871 . . . . *The accession of Ælfred.*

886 (cir.) . Ælfred begins his literary work. The English Chronicle is first carefully edited in this reign.

901 . . . . Death of Ælfred.

913 . . . . Rolf settles in Normandy.

937 . . . . Song of Battle of Brunanburh, in the Chronicle.

961–88 . . Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury.

964, *et seq.* . King Eadgar, with Æthelwold and Oswald, Bishops of Winchester and Worcester, revives English monachism in Wessex and East Anglia.

971 . . . . Blickling Homilies.

991 . . . . Song of the Battle of Maldon.

991–96 . . Ælfric's Homilies; after 1005, his Treatise on the Old and New Testament. (Died 1020–25.)

1031 . . . Swegen of Denmark becomes King of England.

1042–65 . . Reign of Edward the Confessor. England's first contact with French Romance.

Latin translation of a late Greek Romance, Apollonius of Tyre, and of two small books belonging to the Alexander Saga.

1066 . . . The Lay of Roland is brought to England.

1066 . . . *William I.*

1070 . . . Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The "Charlemagne," Norman poem, before the end of the 11th century.

1071 . . . The Exeter Book given by Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, to his Cathedral.

1085 . . . The Domesday Book.

1087 . . . *William II.* crowned by Lanfranc.

1093 . . . Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.

1095 . . . The beginning of the Crusades. The stories of the East soon come to the West.

1100 . . . *Henry I.*

1109 . . . University of Paris rises into importance with William of Champeaux and Peter Abelard.

A.D.

1110 . . . Miracle play of St. Catherine.

1118 . . . End of Florence of Worcester's Chronicle.

1120 . . . End of William of Malmesbury's Historia regum Anglorum.

1126–43 . . William of Malmesbury's Historiæ novellæ.

1129 . . . End of Simeon of Durham's Chronicle.

1135–54 . . Henry of Huntingdon's History of England.

1135 . . . *Stephen.*

1132–35 . . Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Britonum. Final form, 1147.

1154 . . . English Chronicle ends.

Gesta Stephani. Hexham Chroniclers.

At the end of reign of Henry I. and during Stephen's reign the Cistercians brought about a religious revival. The Abbeys founded in the North.

1154 . . . *Henry II.*

1155 . . . Wace's Geste des Bretons (Brut d'Engleterre).

1160 . . . Benoit de Sainte More's Roman de Troie.

1156–59? . . John of Salisbury's Polycraticus.

1160–70 . . Walter Map's De Nugis curialium; Golias.

(cir.) The Lais of Marie de France; written in England.

1160–70 . . Robert de Boron's Le petit Saint Graal.

1170 . . . Wace finishes his Roman de Rou.

1170–90 . . Le Grand Saint Graal; Queste de Saint Graal; Lancelot du Lac, by Walter Map?

1180–90? . . Chrestien de Troye's Conte de Graal (Percevale).

Chronicle of Benedict of Peterborough, continued by Roger of Howden.

Ranulf de Glanvill's work on English law.

Richard Fitz Nigel's Dialogus de Scaccario.

Gerald de Barri (Giraldus Cambrensis) — Itinerarium; Journey in Wales; Conquest of Ireland — written in this and the two following reigns.

1189 . . . *Richard I.*

1198 . . . William of Newborough's Chronicle.

In the middle of the 12th century the troubadour poetry of Southern France rose into its fine flower in the work of Bernart de Ventadorn. He had been preceded by Guilhem de Poitiers, the first troubadour of whom we know. Bertrand de Born, Geoffrey Rudel, Pierre Vidal are famous troubadours of this century. The lyrics of Northern France, those of the trouvères, grew out of this Provençal poetry. No lyrical poetry in England in this century. The chansons de geste of the last century in France were largely added to in this. Great literary activity prevailed in Wales from the middle of this century down to the death of Llewellyn in 1282. The epic of the Cid was shaped about 1160–70 out of ballads that had sung the border battles of Moors and Spaniards. In Germany the Minnelieder arose in the middle of the century, and Wolfram von Eschenbach introduced his new conception of Parzival into the Arthurian legend. Also in the middle of this century the Niebelungen Lied was cast into its form. Italian poetry began with Ciullo d'Alcamo in Sicily, and Folcachiero of Siena, in the years 1172-78. In this century also the mediæval tales from India were cast into the History of the Seven Sages, and into the Disciplina Clericalis. These materials were moulded into various shapes by the French poets, and afterwards in England.

A.D.	
1199 . . .	*John.*
	Chronicle of Richard of Devizes. Annals of Barnwell. Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelond, and others.
1150–1200 .	Sayings of Alfred.
1200–30 . .	Roman de la Rose (Part I.) by Guillaume de Lorris.
1205 . . .	Loss of Normandy.
~~1205~~ (cir.) .	Layamon's Brut.
1215 . . .	The Ormulum. The Great Charter.
1210–50 . .	Reign of Frederick II. Italian poetry in Sicily.
1216 . . .	*Henry III.*
	Chronicle of Roger of Wendover at St. Albans.
1235–73 . .	Matthew Paris' Greater Chronicle; History of England; Lives of earlier abbots.

A.D.

1220–76 . . Guido Guinicelli. Father of new national literature in Italy.
1220 (cir.) . Owl and Nightingale (Dorsetshire).
1220 (cir.) . Ancren Riwle (Dorsetshire).
1221 . . . Coming of Black Friars to England (Dominicans).
1224 . . . Coming of Grey Friars (Franciscans).
1225 . . . St. Francis of Assisi's Song to the Sun.
1225–35? . . The Bestiary.
1230–40 (cir.) King Horn.
1235–53 . . Robert Grossetete (Bp. of Lincoln). Chastel d'amour.
1250 (cir.) . Genesis and Exodus.
1258 . . . Provisions of Oxford, Proclamation of King's adhesion to them — in English as well as French.
1262 . . . Miracle plays acted by the Town Guilds.
1264 . . . Battle of Lewes — Ballad.
1264 . . . Corpus Christi Day appointed; fully observed, 1311.
1268 . . . Roger Bacon's Opus Majus.

After Lewes and its war-ballad, the Love Lyric begins in such verse as the Throstle and the Nightingale and the Cuckoo Song. Also the religious lyric in such verse as the Sorrows of Christ and the Lullaby, and the Love Song of Thomas de Hales, a Franciscan. Also the satirical lyric, such as the Land of Cockayne. In this reign Adam Marsh (De Marisco) has a famous Franciscan school at Oxford. The Harrowing of Hell, first dramatic piece in English, belongs to this reign. Northumbria begins again to write in second half of century.

1272 . . . *Edward I.*
The Alexander Romance in English in this reign. The Tristan Story is also widely spread.
Romances arise in Northumbria. Many war-ballads.
1280-87 . . Guido delle Colonne's (a poet of Sicily, born 1250) Historia Destructionis Trojæ. Visited England and wrote Historia de regibus et rebus Angliæ.
1290–93 . . Dante's Vita Nuova.
1300 (cir.) . Gesta Romanorum.

A.D.	
1300 (cir.) .	Havelok the Dane.
1303 . . .	Robert Manning of Brunne's Handlyng Synne. His Chronicle finished 1338.
1300–05 . .	Roman de la Rose (Part II.), by Jean de Meung.
1307 . . .	*Edward II.*
1303–21 . .	Dante's Divine Comedy.
1324 . . .	Court of Love at Toulouse.
1320–30 . .	Cursor Mundi (Northumbrian). William Shoreham's Poems (Kentish). A Cycle of Homilies, Legend Cycle (both Northumbrian) are now worked at. Sir Tristrem; Sire Otuel; Guy of Warwick; Bevis of Hampton; all now in English.
1327 . . .	*Edward III.*
1330 . . .	Pilgrimage of Human Life, a French poem by Guillaume de Delguileville. Legenda Aurea, by Jacobus a Voragine, Bishop of Genoa. Guillaume de Machault. (B. 1282 (cir.); d. 1370 (cir.).)
1340 (cir.) .	Richard Rolle of Hampole's Pricke of Conscience.
1340 . . .	Dan Michel of Northgate's Ayenbite of Inwyt.
1341 . . .	Petrarca crowned laureate at Rome.
1345 . . .	Death of Richard Aungerville, Bishop of Durham, writer of Philobiblion; leaves library to Oxford.
1333–52 . .	Songs of Laurence Minot on King Edward's wars.
1350, *et seq.* .	Collections of books, and University foundations in England now begin to serve literature.
1350–53 . .	Decameron of Boccaccio. 1341, La Teseide. 1348, Filostrato.
1350 (cir.) .	Romances are now written on the Welsh marches in alliterative Old English verse; subject and *mise-en-scène* French, verse and diction national. Among first of these, Joseph of Arimathie and two fragments of an Alexander Romance.
1355 . . .	William of Palerne. 1350? Tale of Gamelyn.
1355 (cir.) .	Anturs of Arthur at the Tarnawathelan.
1360–70 (cir.)	Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight, Pearl, Cleanness and Patience. — Perhaps by the "philosophical Strode."

A.D.	
1362–63 . .	Langland's Vision of Piers the Plowman. (A-Text.)
1366–70 . .	Chaucer's first poems. Book of the Duchess, 1369.
1373 . . .	Petrarca's Griselda.
1375 . . .	Barbour's Bruce.
1377 . . .	*Richard II.*
1377 . . .	B-Text of Piers the Plowman.
1378? . . .	Wyclif's Summa in Theologia.
1379 . . .	New College, Oxford; Latin School at Winchester founded by William of Wykeham.
1380 . . .	Wyclif's translation of the Bible.
1380–83 . .	Chaucer's Troilus and Cressida.
1382–85 . .	Chaucer's Parlement of Foules, Hous of Fame, Legend of Good Women.
1383 (cir.) .	Wyclif's Trialogus. (Died 1384.)
1385–89 . .	Chaucer's Prologue and many of the Canterbury Tales.
1393? . . .	Gower's Confessio Amantis.
1395 . . .	Chrysoloras comes to Florence to teach Greek. Guarino Guarini teaches Greek at Venice, Florence, Ferrara. (Born 1370; died 1460.)
1398? . . .	C-Text of Piers the Plowman.

From Boccaccio to the middle of the 16th century a great mass of Italian Novelle were produced; used in England for plays, stories, &c.

1399 . . .	*Henry IV.*
1400 . . .	Death of Chaucer and Langland.
1411–12 . .	Hoccleve's Gouvernail of Princes.
1413 . . .	*Henry V.*
1415 . . .	Eustache Deschamps dies. Alain Chartier and Christine de Pisan, his contemporaries.
1421 . . .	Lydgate's Troy Book. 1424–25, Story of Thebes.
1422 . . .	*Henry VI.*
1422 . . .	James I. of Scotland: The King's Quair.
1422 . . .	Paston Letters begin; end 1509.
1423 . . .	John Aurispa brings from Greece to Italy more than 200 MSS.
1424–25 . .	Lydgate's Falles of Princes.

A.D.

1427 . . . Filelfo, laden with MSS., returns from Greece to Florence.

Pletho, Bessarion, Gaza have diffused the spirit of ancient learning in Italy by 1440. Universities at Pavia, Turin, Ferrara, Florence, &c. Eight hundred MSS. left by Niccolo Niccoli to Florence, in 1436; cradle of the Laurentian Library.

1449 . . . Pecock's Repressor of Overmuch blaming of the Clergy.
1453 . . . Fall of Constantinople.
1450 (cir.) . Invention of Printing.
1460–80 . . Poems of Robert Henryson.
1461 . . . *Edward IV.*
1470 . . . Malory's Morte Darthur.
1474–76 . . Caxton sets up printing press at Westminster.
1481 . . . Luigi Pulci's Morgante Maggiore.
1483 . . . *Edward V. Richard III.*
1485 . . . *Henry VII.*
1495? . . . Boiardo's Orlando Inamorato begun.
1501 . . . Gawin Douglas' Palace of Honour.
1503 . . . Dunbar's Thistle and Rose.
1504 . . . Sannazaro's Arcadia.
1506 . . . Hawes' Pastime of Pleasure.
1507 . . . Skelton's Bowge of Court; Boke of Phyllip Sparowe.
1507–08 . . Dunbar's Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins.
1509 . . . *Henry VIII.*
1509 . . . Erasmus: Praise of Folly.
1513 . . . Gawin Douglas: Translation of the Æneid.
1513? . . . Sir Thos. More's Life of Edward V. and History of Richard III. written.
1515 . . . Trissino's Sofonisba; first use of blank verse in Italy.
1516 . . . Ariosto's Orlando Furioso begun; the rest in 1532.
1516 . . . Sir Thos. More's Utopia, written in Latin.
1518? . . . Skelton's Colin Clout.
1518? . . . Amadis de Gaul translated into English.

A.D.

1524 . . . Ronsard born. (Died 1586.)
1527 . . . Tyndale's translation of the New Testament.
1528 . . . Lyndsay's Dreme.
1520–40 . . Heywood's Interludes.
1532, *et seq.* . Rabelais' Gargantua, &c.
1535 . . . Lyndsay's Satire of the Three Estates.
1540 . . . Cranmer's Bible.
1541? . . . Ralph Roister Doister, first English comedy, printed 1566.
1545 . . . Ascham's Toxophilus.
1547 . . . *Edward VI.*
1549 . . . Latimer's Sermon on the Ploughers.
1549–52 . . English Prayer Book.
1551 . . . Ralph Robinson's translation of More's Utopia into English.
1553 . . . *Mary.*
1553 . . . Lyndsay's Monarchie.
1557 . . . Tottel's Miscellany; poems by Wyatt and Surrey.
1558 . . . *Elizabeth.*
1559 . . . Sackville's Mirror for Magistrates.
1561–62 . . Gorboduc, the first English Tragedy. Printed as Ferrex and Porrex, 1571.
1562 . . . Phaer's Virgil. Many other translations of the classics before 1579.
1563 . . . Foxe's Book of Martyrs.
1563 . . . Sackville's Induction to Mirror for Magistrates.
1570 . . . Ascham's Schoolmaster.
1571 . . . R. Edward's Damon and Pithias printed.
1575 . . . Comedy of Gammer Gurton's Needle printed. Play of Apius and Virginia printed.
1576 . . . Paradise of Dainty Devices; 1578, Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions; 1584, Handfull of Pleasant Delights — all Poetical Miscellanies.
1576 . . . Three theatres built in London; Blackfriars, the Curtain, the Theatre.
1576 . . . Gascoigne's Steele Glas. (First verse satire.)
1577 . . . Holinshed's Chronicle.

A.D.	
1579–80 . .	Lyly's Euphues. 1580–1601 (cir.) his dramas.
1579 . . .	Spenser's Shepheards Calendar.
1579 . . .	North's Plutarch's Lives.
1580–81 . .	Sidney's Arcadia and Apologie for Poetrie.
1580–88 . .	Montaigne's Essaies. ——
1581 . . .	Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata.
1582? . . .	Watson's Hecatompathia or Passionate Century.
1583–1625? .	Pamphleteers: Greene, Lodge, G. Harvey, Nash, Dekker, Breton.
1584–92 . .	Dramas of Greene. 1583, *et seq.*, Tales in prose.
1584–98 . .	Dramas of Peele.
1586 . . .	Warner's Albion's England.
1587 . . .	Marlowe's Tamburlaine acted. (Printed 1590.)
1588–90 . .	Marlowe's Faustus, Jew of Malta, Edward II.
1588–90 . .	Series of Martin Marprelate Tracts.
1588–90? . .	Love's Labour's Lost.
1589 . . .	Hakluyt's Voyages.
1590 . . .	Spenser's Faerie Queene (Books i.–iii. 1596, iv.–vi.).
1591 . . .	Harrington's translation of Ariosto's Orlando.
1593	Donne's Satires (died 1626).
1593 . . .	Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis.
1594 . . .	Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity (Bks. i.–iv. 1597, v.).
1593–96 . .	Many collections of Sonnets.
1595 . . .	Daniel's Hist. of Civil Wars of York and Lancaster.
1596, *et seq.* .	Ben Jonson's Dramas. (Died 1637.)
1594–96 . .	Merchant of Venice.
1597 . . .	Bacon's Essays. (First set.)
1597–98 . .	Hall's Satires.
1598 . . .	Chapman's Homer (First part). Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas.
1598–99 . .	Marston's Satires.
1596–98 . .	Drayton's Barons' Wars and England's Heroical Epistles.
1599 . . .	The Globe Theatre built.
1600 . . .	England's Helicon; England's Parnassus; Belvedere; all poetical Miscellanies.
1600 . . .	Fairfax's translation of Tasso.

A.D.	
1600 . . .	Lope de Vega began his dramas about 1590, and continued writing till his death in 1635.
1600–81 . .	Calderon, who had a large influence on the French Drama of the 17th and 18th centuries, on the English Restoration Drama, and on the Italian, German and English poetry of 18th and 19th centuries.
1603 (cir.)? .	The Return from Parnassus.
1603 . . .	Florio's translation of Montaigne's Essays.
1603 . . .	*James I.*
1603 . . .	Knolles' History of the Turks.
1604 . . .	Authorised Version of the Bible.
1605 . . .	Bacon's Advancement of Learning (Books i. and ii.).
1606–16 . .	Cervantes' Don Quixote.
1609 . . .	Shakespeare's Sonnets published.
1610–25 (cir.)	Dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher.
1610 . . .	Giles Fletcher's Christ's Victory.
1611 . . .	Speed's History of Great Britain.
1612 . . .	Webster's first drama, The White Devil (printed).
1612–20 . .	T. Shelton's Translation of Don Quixote.
1613–14 . .	Drayton's Polyolbion.
1613–16 . .	Browne's Britannia's Pastorals; 1614, The Shepherd's Pipe.
1613 . . .	Purchas his Pilgrimage.
1613 . . .	Wither's Abuses Stript and Whipt.
1613 . . .	Drummond of Hawthornden's first poem. (D. 1649.)
1614 . . .	Raleigh's History of the World.
1615 . . .	Sandys' Travels.
1615 . . .	Wither's Shepherd's Hunting.
1616 . . .	Chapman's Homer finished. Shakespeare dies.
1621 . . .	Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.
1622 . . .	Massinger's Virgin Martyr. (Died 1639.)
1623 . . .	Webster's Duchess of Malfi (printed).
1623 . . .	Waller's first poems.
1623 . . .	The "First Folio" of Shakespeare.
	Chapman, Tourneur, Middleton, and other dramatists wrote during this reign.

A.D.

1625 . . . Charles I.
1628 . . . Harvey's De Motu Sanguinis.
1629 . . . Milton's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity.
1631 . . . George Herbert's Temple.
1635? . . . Sir Thos. Browne's Religio Medici (pub. 1642).
1632–37 . . Milton's Allegro, Penseroso, Comus, Lycidas.
1633 . . . Phineas Fletcher's Purple Island.
1634 . . . Ford's historical play of Perkin Warbeck.
1636 . . . Corneille's first tragedy, the Cid. His last play, 1675.
1636 . . . French Academy founded.
1640 . . . Thomas Carew's poems.
1641 . . . Milton's first pamphlet.
1641 . . . Evelyn's Diary begins (ends 1697; published 1818).
1642 . . . Theatres closed.
1642 . . . Fuller's Holy and Profane state.
1642 . . . Denham's Cooper's Hill.
1642 . . . Hobbes' De Cive.
1644 . . . Milton's Areopagitica.
1645 . . . Waller's poems.
1645 . . . Meetings held which lead to formation of the Royal Society.
1646 . . . Crashaw's Steps to the Temple.
1647 . . . Jeremy Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying.
1647 . . . Cowley's Mistress. Davideis, 1641(?).
1647–48 . . Herrick's Noble Numbers; Hesperides.
1648 . . . J. Beaumont's Psyche or Love's Mystery.
1648 . . . Suckling's Fragmenta Aurea.
1649 . . . Lovelace's Lucasta.
1649 . . . Commonwealth.
1650 . . . Baxter's Saints' Rest.
1650 . . . Milton's Defensio pro Populo Anglicano.
1650–52 . . Marvell's Garden poems written.
1650–56 . . Vaughan's Silex Scintillans.
1650–57 . . Pascal's Provincial Letters.
1651 . . . Hobbes' Leviathan.
1653 . . . Izaak Walton's Compleat Angler.
1653 . . . Molière's first play.

A.D.	
1656	Harrington's Oceana.
1659	Dryden's Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell.
1659	Corneille's Essay on the Three Unities.
1659–60	Pepys' Diary begins (finished 1669; published 1825).
1660	Boileau's first satire.
1660	*Charles II.*
1660	Re-opening of the theatres by Davenant and Killigrew.
1662	Royal Society incorporated.
1663	Dryden's first play, the Wild Gallant.
1663	Butler's Hudibras (Part I.).
1663	Algernon Sidney's Discourses concerning Government, published 1698.
1663	The London Public Intelligencer. (Becomes the London Gazette, 1666.)
1663–67	Plays of Racine. Esther, 1689 (?), Athalie, 1690(?).
1664	La Fontaine's first book of *Contes*.
1667	Dryden's Annus Mirabilis; Essay on Dramatic Poesy.
1667	Cowley's Essays.
1667	Milton's Paradise Lost.
1667	Petty's Treatise on Taxes.
1668	La Fontaine's first book of Fables. (Died 1695.)
1670	Izaak Walton's Lives.
1670	Pascal's Les Pensées.
1671	Paradise Regained. Samson Agonistes.
1671–77	Dramas of Wycherley.
1672	Dryden's Essay on Heroic Plays.
1674	Boileau's Art of Poetry.
1678	Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. (Part I.)
1678	Dryden's All for Love. (In blank verse.)
1678	Cudworth's Intellectual System of the Universe.
1680	Filmer's Patriarcha.
1681	Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel. (First part.)
1682	Dryden's Medal, MacFlecknoe, Religio Laici.
1684	Pilgrim's Progress. (Part II.)
	Clarendon's History of the Great Rebellion written during this reign. (Published 1707.)

A.D.

1685 . . . *James II.*

1687 . . . Newton's Principia.

1687 . . . Defoe's first tract.

1687 . . . La Bruyère's Les Caractères.

1688–89 . . *The Revolution. William III.*

1690 . . . Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.

1692 . . . Sir Wm. Temple's Miscellanea, Vol. ii.

1693–1700 . Congreve's dramas.

1694 . . . Dryden's Last Play.

1697–1705 . Dramas of Vanbrugh.

1698 . . . Collier's Short View of the Immorality of the Stage

1698–1707 . Dramas of Farquhar.

1700 . . . Dryden's Fables. (Nov. 1699.)

1700 . . . Prior's Carmen Seculare.

1702 . . . *Anne.*

1702 . . . Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana.

1702–05 . . Steele's Plays. (1722. Comedy of the Conscious Lovers, his last play.)

1704 . . . Swift's Tale of a Tub, Battle of the Books. (Written by 1596–97.)

1704 . . . Addison's Campaign. Rosamond (opera), 1706.

1704–13 . . Defoe's Review.

1709 . . . Mat Prior's Poems.

1709–11 . . The Tatler.

1709–44 . . Writings of Bishop Berkeley.

1709 . . . Pope's Pastorals. (Written 1704–05.)

1711–12–14 . The Spectator.

1712 . . . Pope's Rape of the Lock. (Final form 1714.)

1713 . . . Addison's Cato.

1714 . . . Gay's Shepherd's Week.

1714 . . . *George I.*

1715–20 . . Pope's Homer's Iliad.

1715, *et seq.* . Le Sage's Gil Blas.

1719 . . . Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. 1720–25, Other novels.

1724–34 . . Bp. Burnet's History of my own Times published.

1725 . . . Allan Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd. (First form 1723.)

1726–30 . . Thomson's Seasons.

A.D.	
1726–27 . .	Swift's Gulliver's Travels.
1727 . . .	*George II.*
1727 . . .	Gay's Fables. 1728, Beggar's Opera.
1728 . . .	Pope's Dunciad. (First form. Others in 1729–42–43.)
1728 . . .	Voltaire's Henriade.
1730 . . .	Marivaux: Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard. (D. 1763.)
1732–34 . .	Pope's Essay on Man. Moral Essays, 1732–35.
1732–48 . .	Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac.
1735 . . .	Johnson's Translation of Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia. (His first work.)
1736 . . .	Butler's Analogy of Religion.
1737 . . .	Shenstone's Schoolmistress. (Final form, 1742.)
1738 . . .	Johnson's London.
1739 . . .	Hume's Treatise of Human Nature.
1740 . . .	Richardson's Pamela. 1748, Clarissa Harlowe.
1741 . . .	Warburton's Divine Legation.
1740–41 . .	Hume's Essays.
1742 . . .	Fielding's Joseph Andrews. 1749, Tom Jones.
1742–69 . .	Gray's Poems. (Collected edition 1768.)
1744 . . .	Johnson's Life of Savage.
1744 . . .	Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination.
1746 . . .	Collins' Odes.
1748 . . .	Smollett's Roderick Random.
1748 . . .	Thomson's Castle of Indolence.
1748 . . .	Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois.
1749 . . .	Diderot's Encyclopédie begun.
1749 . . .	Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes; Irene.
1750–52 . .	Johnson's Rambler.
1751–52 . .	Hume's Principles of Morals and Political Discourse
1754 . . .	Richardson's Sir Chas. Grandison.
1754 . . .	Edwards' Freedom of the Will.
1754–61 . .	Hume's History of England.
1755 . . .	Johnson's Dictionary.
1756 . . .	Burke's Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful; Vindication of Natural Society.
1757 . . .	Hume's Natural History of Religion.
1758 . . .	Robertson's History of Scotland. 1769, Charles V.

A.D.

1758 . . . Lessing's Litteraturbriefe.
1759 . . . Johnson's Rasselas.
1759 . . . Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments.
1759 . . . Sterne's Tristram Shandy. (Vols. 1 and 2.)
1759–90 . . Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourses on Art.
1760 . . . George III.
1760 . . . Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloïse.
1760 . . . Sterne's Tristram Shandy. (2 vols.; finished 1765.)
1760–65 . . Macpherson's Ossian.
1761–64 . . Poems of Churchill.
1762 . . . Falconer's Shipwreck.
1764–70 . . Chatterton's Poems.
1765 . . . Goldsmith's Traveller.
1765 . . . Bishop Percy's Reliques of English Poetry.
1765 . . . H. Walpole's Castle of Otranto.
1766 . . . Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield. (Written 1762?)
1766 . . . Lessing's Laokoön.
1768–78 . . Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan.
1769 . . . Burke's Present State of the Nation.
1769–72 . . Letters of Junius.
1770 . . . Burke's Thoughts on the Present Discontents.
1770 . . . Goldsmith's Deserted Village.
1771–74 . . Beattie's Minstrel.
1773 . . . Ferguson's Poems.
1774 . . . Burke's Speech on American Taxation.
1774 . . . Goethe's Werther.
1775 . . . Beaumarchais: Le Mariage de Figaro.
1775 . . . Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America.
1776 . . . Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations.
1776 . . . Declaration of Independence.
1776 . . . Paine's Common Sense.
1777–81 . . T. Warton's History of English Poetry.
1776–88 . . Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
1777 . . . Robertson's History of America.
1778 . . . Frances Burney's Evelina.
1779–81 . . Johnson's English Poets.
1781 . . . Schiller's Die Räuber.

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1783 . . . Crabbe's Village.
1783 . . . Blake's Poetical Sketches.
1785 . . . Cowper's Task.
1786 . . . Samuel Rogers' Poems.
1786 . . . Burns' first Poems.
1789 . . . Blake's Songs of Innocence. 1794, Songs of Experience.
1789 . . . White's Natural History of Selborne.
1790 . . . Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.
1791–92 . . Paine's Rights of Man. 1794–95, Age of Reason.
1791 . . . Boswell's Life of Johnson.
1792–94 . . Arthur Young's Travels in France.
1793 . . . Godwin's Enquiry concerning Political Justice.
1793 . . . Wordsworth's Evening Walk; Descriptive Sketches.
1794 . . . Coleridge and Southey's Fall of Robespierre.
1796 . . . Poems; by Coleridge and Lamb.
1796 . . . Scott's translation of Bürger's Lenore.
1796–97 . . Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace.
1797 . . . Poems by Coleridge, Lamb, and Lloyd.
1797 . . . Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin.
1798 . . . Lyrical Ballads; by Coleridge and Wordsworth.
1798 . . . Malthus' Essay on the Principles of Population.
1798 . . . Landor's Gebir and other Poems.
1798 . . . Ebenezer Elliott's Vernal Walk.
1799 . . . Scott's translation of Götz von Berlichingen.
1799 . . . Campbell's Pleasures of Hope.
1800 . . . Coleridge's translation of Schiller's Wallenstein.
1801 . . . Southey's Thalaba. (He continued writing till 1843.)
1802 . . . Scott's Border Minstrelsy.
1802 . . . The Edinburgh Review.
1805 . . . Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel.
1807 . . . Byron's Hours of Idleness.
1807 . . . Wordsworth's Poems in 2 vols.
1807 . . . T. Moore's Irish Melodies begun.
1807–08 . . Lamb's Specimens of Dramatic Poetry.
1808 . . . Scott's Marmion. 1810, Lady of the Lake.
1809 . . . The Quarterly Review.

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1809 . . .	Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.
1810 . . .	Allan Cunningham's first published poems. (D.1842.)
1811–18 . .	Novels of Jane Austen.
1812–18 . .	Byron's Childe Harold.
1813 . . .	Shelley's Queen Mab. 1816, Alastor.
1814 . . .	Scott's Waverley. (His novels continue till 1831.)
1814 . . .	Wordsworth's Excursion.
1814 . . .	H. Cary's Translation of Dante.
1816 . . .	Coleridge's Christabel ; Kubla Khan.
1816? . . .	Leigh Hunt's Story of Rimini.
1817 . . .	Byron's Manfred. 1818, Beppo; 1819–23, Don Juan.
1817 . . .	Coleridge's Biographia Literaria.
1817 . . .	Keats' first poems.
1817 . . .	Bryant's Thanatopsis.
1817, *et seq.* .	Hazlitt's Dramatic and Poetical Criticisms. (Died 1830.)
1818 . . .	Hallam's View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages. 1827, Constitutional Hist. of England.
1819 . . .	Irving's The Sketch-Book.
1820 . . .	*George IV.*
1820 . . .	Keats' Hyperion and other Poems.
1820 . . .	Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.
1821 . . .	Byron's Cain and other dramas.
1821 . . .	De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater.
1821 . . .	Shelley's Adonais and Epipsychidion.
1821 . . .	Cooper's The Spy.
1821–23 . .	Lamb's Essays of Elia.
1822 . . .	T. L. Beddoes' Bride's Tragedy.
1822 . . .	Rogers' Italy.
1822–33 . .	Prof. Wilson's Noctes Ambrosianæ. (In Blackwood.)
1824 . . .	Carlyle's translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister.
1825 . . .	Macaulay's Essay on Milton.
1826 . . .	Poems by Two Brothers. (Chas. and Alfd. Tennyson.)
1827 . . .	Disraeli's Vivian Gray.
1827 . . .	Keble's Christian Year.
1827 . . .	Bulwer Lytton's Pelham.
1827 . . .	Poe's Tamerlane and other Poems.

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1830 . . . *William IV.*
1830 . . . Alfred Tennyson: Poems.
1830 . . . Moore's Life of Byron.
1830 . . . Mrs. Hemans' Songs of the Affections.
1831, *et seq.* . Ebenezer Elliott's Corn Law Rhymes.
1831 . . . Robert Browning's Pauline; published 1833.
1832 . . . Death of Sir Walter Scott. Death of Goethe.
1834 . . . Carlyle's Sartor Resartus.
1836 . . . Dickens' Pickwick.
1836 . . . Emerson's Nature.
1836 . . . Holmes' Poems.
1837 . . . *Victoria.*
1837 . . . Carlyle's French Revolution.
1837 . . . Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales.
1838 . . . Whittier's Poems.
1838 . . . Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym.
1839 . . . Longfellow's Voices of the Night.
1841 . . . Newman's Tracts for the Times, No. xc.
1842 . . . Browning's Dramatic Lyrics.
1843 . . . Ruskin's Modern Painters. (Vol. I.)
1847 . . . C. Brontë's Jane Eyre.
1848 . . . Arnold's Strayed Reveller and other Poems.
1848 . . . Macaulay's History of England. (Vol. I.)
1848 . . . Thackeray's Vanity Fair.
1848 . . . Lowell's Biglow Papers (first series).
1848 . . . Thoreau's Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers.
1849 . . . Parkman's California and Oregon Trail.
1850 . . . Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese.
1850 . . . Tennyson's In Memoriam.
1852 . . . Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.
1855 . . . Whitman's Leaves of Grass.
1856 . . . Froude's History of England. (Vol. I.)
1856 . . . Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic.
1858 . . . George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life.
1858 . . . Morris' Defence of Guinevere and other Poems.
1858 . . . Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

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1858 . . . Holmes' Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.
1858 . . . Fitzgerald's Translation of Omar Khayyam.
1859 . . . Darwin's Origin of Species.
1859 . . . Mill's On Liberty.
1862 . . . Spencer's First Principles.
1863 . . . Huxley's Man's Place in Nature.
1864 . . . Lowell's Fireside Travels.
1865 . . . Meredith's Rhoda Fleming.
1865 . . . Arnold's Essays in Criticism (first series).
1866 . . . Swinburne's Poems and Ballads.
1866 . . . Whittier's Snow-Bound.
1869 . . . Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad.
1870 . . . Rossetti's Poems.
1870 . . . Bret Harte's Luck of Roaring Camp.
1872 . . . Howells' Their Wedding Journey.
1873 . . . Pater's Studies in the Renaissance.
1875 . . . James' A Passionate Pilgrim.
1882 . . . Stevenson's New Arabian Nights.

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